ANIMATION WORLD

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Home Video & Animation Art

- Disney's Empire
- Holiday Releases
- Inside Christie's
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- DVD

Plus: Anastasia Reviewed

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Home Videos and Animation Art: keeping a memory alive...

By Heather Kenyon

Home Video and Animation Art do not seem to have a lot in common at first glance but actually they have two distinct connections. The first one is purely financial and not nearly as exciting as the second which is the thrill of collecting and owning tangible reminders of distant memories.

Most major studios have created divisions solely to exploit these two relatively new, revenue-grabbing avenues. George Johnston's article, "Growth Looms In The Made-For-Video Animation Market," details the lucrative nature of direct-to-home videos and thus, this market's appeal for many companies, both large and small. In the same vein "Collecting Animation Art 101" by Steven Grossfeld outlines the many different forms of animation art that exist for sale. Fifteen years ago the average person probably didn't even know what animation art was. Now, they have a myriad of choices and they know they want this stuff because it is cool. It is trendy. With no shortage of product to choose from and outlets to purchase from, consumers have made studios realize the gold mine on which they have been sitting.

No longer a surprise, home video and animation art releases are now assumed. As I left the theater after *Hercules*, I had to have heard a few children saying, "Yea, I liked that one. Can we get the video?" And people have been musing, "I wonder when and who is going to distribute the *Anastasia* cels?" before principal animation was even completed. Furthermore, while true original production cels often don't even exist from newer productions, cels are created just to meet the demand that has been masterfully created. It should be noted as well, that a publicity campaign is *not* in the works advertising the fact that digital ink and paint is eliminating a lot of original production cels. I wonder how many people out there swear that they have original production art when what they really have is limited editions *taken* from original production art.

On the warmer and fuzzier side of home video and animation art, we have the fact that people love these products enough to buy them and bring them into their homes. I own both videos and animation art, only because each specific tape or cel has a special meaning to me. *101 Dalmatians* sits in my box of videos at home because I love Cruella deVil with a passion. No matter how bad things get, the sight of her in her roadster, speeding around a snow covered mountain, you know the part, where the flames are coming out of all the exhaust pipes...it just makes me laugh.

The same goes for my animation art. While growing up, *The Jetsons* were my favorite, so when I saw that shot of Elroy, Astro and Rosie the Maid looking up in wonder - it had to be mine. No matter the cel is from *Jetsons, the Movie* and not some classic episode of the series, it is those characters that I love. When I was a kid the channel that *The Jetsons* was on didn't always come in so good. When it did, wow! What a treat. I have other television cels as well because those cels take me back to early Saturday mornings when my brother and I would wander out into the solitude of the family living room to watch television. Spilling milk on the couch from cereal bowls being tipped, getting jam on the carpet, being told to turn down the sound, the agony of *Gumby* coming to an end for another week...

I also have the limited edition cel "Anchors Aweigh" featuring Gene Kelly and Jerry, from *Tom and Jerry* fame, dancing together. I had to own a little bit of that 1950s optimism. A little bit of Americana. A little bit of an American icon who is now gone. That is the reason to own animation art. Don't own animation art because someone tells

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you it is a good investment. Own animation art, and videos for that matter, because you want to, because you love what they represent to you.

Once someone who was directing and producing his own animated show, told me that he didn't think the cels from his show were pieces of "his" art. Since so many hands had touched the characters in-between his desk and the time they ended up on a cel, he felt the cel only belonged to the characters. Cels are what gives a character life, so he felt cels only really represent the character. 'They are artwork of the characters but are they art?' he questioned. Well, let's look at that for a minute. Did I love *The Jetsons* because it was art or because of the characters who made me laugh? As a child, I loved them only because they made me laugh. Today, I can love them because of my childhood memories, my fondness of animation, and I can also appreciate them hanging on my wall as art, animation art ... however murky that definition may be.

Why do you own your favorite videos and cels? Drop us a line...at editor@awn.com.

Until Next Time...
Heather

Bonus HTML Features

Every online (HTML) issue of *Animation World Magazine* contains additional features not found in the download or print Acrobat version, such as Quicktime movies, links to Animation World Network sites, extended articles and special sections. Don't miss the following highlights that are showcased exclusively in this month's *Animation World Magazine* HTML version:

http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.8/2.8pages/2.8cover.html

- ***Speed Racer***
  Our interview with director J.J. Sedelmaier includes Quicktime movies of his *Speed Racer* Volkswagen commercial, as well as a clip of a new *Speed Racer* spot he produced for Cartoon Network.

- ***Smash***
  This review includes a Quicktime movie of Kirsten Winter's short experimental film, *Smash.*

- **Odyssey Videos**
  This review includes a Quicktime movie from *Turbulence.*

- **The Life Cycle of DVD**
  For a humorous look at the history of failed technologies, take a look at Russell Bekins' illustrative charts, "Archeological Discoveries: The Year 3050," and "The Great Wrestling Match.

editor@awn.com

An Open Letter to the ASIFA-Hollywood Awards and Nominating Committees

Okay, here's the problem voting members of ASIFA-Hollywood have:

How do they vote on Individual Achievement Awards if the example being submitted has more than one name on the credits? The logical answer? The multiple credit example does NOT qualify for an individual achievement award. YET, I see in ASIFA-Hollywood's house newsletter, *The Inbetweener,* that there are many "individual" award nominees that have two or more names attached.

An example: "Outstanding Individual Achievement for PRODUCING IN A FEATURE PRODUCTION" (I can only wonder what the criteria is for this judgment call!). This category shows three producers for the *Hercules* feature.

Come on, people! That's not an INDIVIDUAL achievement! It's a TEAM achievement!

Another example: "Outstanding Individual Achievement for MUSIC IN AN ANIMATED TELEVISION PRODUCTION." Under *Boo! To You Winnie The Pooh,* I see listed two names under the title: songwriter.

Excuse me. That's songwriters...plural. No individual achievement here. Two people collaborating. A TEAM achievement again.

Another example: "PRODUCING IN AN ANIMATED TELEVISION PRODUCTION." Two names again under this nomination for *The Simpsons,* "The Springfield Files." Yet, when you look at the credits or see the vast amount of people that go up on stage to receive a Primetime [Emmy] award, it obviously takes more than those two folks to produce a show of that caliber. So, are the two people nominated here the REAL producers and everyone else who got credit FAKE producers? Doesn't matter, two or twenty, it's a TEAM again.

Why are the categories of "individual achievement" created if not to acknowledge the exceptional personal effort of an outstanding individual? By "ganging" up the credits like this you minimize the achievement.

I'm not suggesting that the credits in those categories are bogus. Film is often, I'd say usually, a team effort. Other awards reflect this. Why muddy up a competition with examples that don't fit the very basic qualification of being INDIVIDUAL?

Nominating committees, ignore the temptation to nominate your friends whether they qualify or not. Save yourself a lot of work by eliminating all credits in the "Individual" categories that have more than one name attached.

Awards committee, the idea of an individual achievement award is a good one. Don't make it a farce by allowing this type of competition. Judge teamwork against teamwork and individuals against individuals.

(And what were you thinking of when you created the "Producing for" category?)

Larry Huber
Executive Producer, *Oh Yeah! Cartoons,* Nicktoons

cc: ASIFA-Hollywood

Dear Mr. Huber:

Thank you for copying your letter to Animation World Magazine. *I am sure a number of our readers will be interested in this letter and we encourage this to be an open forum for discussion.*

Sincerely,
The Editors

Another New School

In regards to where and what is the best animation school to learn character animation may I add to the list, NBCC Miramichi, New Brunswick. With it's animation and graphic technology course, it is the East Coast solution. This new program has only just been initiated, but it does offer traditional animation and drawing courses, as well as computer animation training. In fact, NBCC presently has state of the art equipment for training.

It is a two year program with the second year emphasis on an entrepreneurial business aspect of animation, where the student is to secure a client to produce a product. NBCC also offers programs in virtual reality, electronic game design, artificial intelligence and multi-media. I would highly recommend this course, but then again, I'm one of the instructors.

Harold Duckett
Classical Animation Instructor
Miramichi College

Dear Mr. Duckett:

Thank you for the information! We appreciate hearing from our readers and I'm sure students out there are taking note.

Sincerely,
The Editors

Toby Talk: *In His Own Words*

by Toby Bluth

Mapleton, Utah is cold in the winter. We were piss-poor Utah dirt farmers. The house was adobe brick and couldn't contain the whole family, so my folks converted the adjacent potato cellar into a room for my brother Don and I. The only thing colder than Utah in the winter was that potato cellar. In spite of the fact that we had an old coal stove with a smoke chimney to keep us warm, it was still freezing. Don and I would stoke up that stove until it glowed red hot and then, dressed in flannel pajamas and fat winter overcoats, we would make a bee-line for the bed and snuggle close like puppies to keep warm. Then we would quote the Disney films, acting out the various parts (Don always did the leads, but then he was older) and that's how we went to sleep. Is it any wonder that we grew up with an enormous love for Disney and for animation, and that we both have made it our life's work?

Babes in Toyland, the new direct-to-video, animated feature co-directed by Toby Bluth. © 1997 MGM Home Entertainment.

The Humor of God

I am absolutely convinced that among other infinite qualities, God possesses an enormous sense of humor. Please don't misunderstand me; I do not pretend to know who God is, however, I do know she exists. This sense of humor is painfully clear to me when I look at the Bluth family.

Poor Father did not understand the arts, any of them, much less how you would ever make a living doing such things. He understood work and worked harder than any man I've ever known. Now the joke. He had seven children (six boys and one girl) who are all artistic, each one as talented as the other. Is it any wonder that this man found it difficult to communicate with his own children? We lived in a world different from his. We even talked a different language, and it was sadly a place he didn't know how to be a part of.

Then there was Mother. She claimed she couldn't draw or carry a tune in a bucket. I don't believe she ever considered herself in any way exceptional. Poor Mama never realized that she was the most exceptional person I have ever known.

For as long as I can remember, my mother kept scrapbooks. She would collect pictures of any beautiful image she could find and paste them in a scrapbook like bits of treasure. Little did she know that each beautiful image was also being imprinted on the lives of her children; priceless pieces of beauty, joy, grace, charm and love. Many years later, I saw the flowering of Mother's artistic talent when she got an architect, a bulldozer and a construction crew and, out of her scrapbooks, created her dream house.

For now, here we are, Don and me, a couple of dirt farmers from Utah, each with an animated feature being released at the same time.

My brothers and my sister and I will forever owe a great debt of gratitude to our mother for nurturing the artistic spirit of her children. Certainly my brother Don and I would not be doing what we are doing today if it were not for Mom.

My First "Broadway" Musical

Sure, Pop didn't get the artistic stuff but he never failed to support us as we pursued it. When I was seventeen I wanted to do a Broadway musical - *Plain and Fancy*. It was an amateur production, but hey, we were kids. For actors and singers I used my friends, most of whom could do neither. For the stage I located a junior high school

auditorium. This was great! I was doin' *Broadway*. My plan had only one tiny flaw, as even an amateur production costs something. I know that backers for Broadway shows are called angels and so I went about seeking angels. My potential angels were amused, but declined. After weeks of frustration it became clear, even to me, that *Plain and Fancy* was not going to happen. Then one afternoon I got a call from my piano teacher. She said, "I think we found your angel. He will provide the full $500. that is needed to pay the royalties and rent the hall." I was ecstatic. "But," she continued, "he has only one stipulation. He wishes to remain anonymous, and if you can accept that you can have your show." The show was a "triumph." Time rolled on and I continually asked my piano teacher, "Who was the angel?" But true to her promise, she would never reveal his identity. Many years later as I sat in her kitchen she said, "I'm going to tell you something and I hope I'm not doing a bad thing, but that $500. came from your Dad." Since I was under the obligation of secrecy I couldn't even thank him - until now. Thanks Dad.

What is my point with all this? Simply that these experiences, and countless others like them, molded and shaped every aspect of my life both personal and professional, which by the way, I consider to be the same thing. Whether it is an hour television special *The Story of Santa Claus,* which thanks to Film Roman I was allowed to design and direct for CBS last year, or the feature *Babes in Toyland,* which thanks to MGM I was allowed to design and direct for the home video market this year, it is all based on and contains the images, the experiences and the love that was part of my childhood. Having been so blessed how can I consider whatever I may accomplish in the world of animation anything less then a privilege to repay a debt that will never be repayable.

I firmly believe that a success for anyone in this business is success for all of us.

Two innocent children, Jack and Jill, are the main characters in Babes in Toyland. © 1997 MGM Home Entertainment.

The Now

But lo, God's humor continues. For now, here we are, Don and me, a couple of dirt farmers from Utah, each with an animated feature being released at the same time. Ain't life funny?

In no way do I consider any of this competition. I don't really believe in competition. I think it's an inferior motive. You know what I mean, to measure your self-worth against someone else? There will always be people better then I am and there will always be people worse, but this much I know - there will never be anyone quite like me. I feel that way about this entire industry. Animation is a very tiny and fragile part of the motion picture business. Today we are greatly in demand, but it has not always been so. I firmly believe that a success for anyone in this business is success for all of us. A failure for anyone is a failure for all of us. What kind of a person would I be, or how could I truly profess that I love the art of animation, if I rooted for the failure of any animated film from any animation studio, or if by some misguided sense of competition, I tried to take the wind out of someone else's sails? I can't believe that anyone, from Steven Spielberg to Michael Eisner doesn't know and believe this too.

What an exciting time for animation! Just look at the studios who are pouring money into our art form. I have never seen anything like it in the history of our business and hopefully, for all of us, it will continue and grow. Thanks to people like Randy Haberkamp from CBS and Don Mirisch, Jonathan Dern and Paul Sabella from MGM, I think it will.

On top of all this, animated film is so young that we still have many of the legends and pioneers who created our industry among us. During the making of my Christmas special, I had the privilege of working with one of these priceless, dedicated living treasures, Phyllis Craig. None of us could have known at the time that *The Story of Santa Claus* was to be her last film. At her memorial there were dedications, awards, galleries and moneys all pledged to animation in her name. What more could anyone ask from life than to know when

We, the artists, are well aware that they, the suits, think of us as "space cadets," and conversely we call them the "bean counters."

The Story of Santa Claus will air on CBS on Friday, December 12 at 9:00 p.m. PST. © CBS.

your time comes to join the feathered quire, those of us who are left behind will forever sing your praises and countless others who you never knew you will see and enjoy your gift. Thank God for Phyllis Craig.

Please bear in mind this is the opinion of a man who's sources of reality are the Bible, The American Musical Comedy Theater, and animated cartoons.

We, the artists, are well aware that they, the suits, think of us as "space cadets," and conversely we call them the "bean counters." Boys and girls... we must get over this. We "cadets" do not exist without you "bean counters," and you do not exist without us. We are all in the same boat together and it is obvious that we'll get a lot farther if we all put our little oars in the water and paddle in the same direction. It's called teamwork.

My Lucky Life

In his lifetime my father understood work only as drudgery. I'm not sure how I lucked out, but I color all day with my crayons and they pay me for it. What a concept. It's mind-boggling. You have fun and they give you money too. When we do a film, we collaborate with other talented people who hopefully are having a good time too. We are all dedicated to doing the best we can to make a film that will delight the viewer. I hope that my films will make you laugh, impart a bit of understanding of the human condition or best of all, move the heart.

Now, I certainly have no objectivity about my latest film, *Babes in Toyland,* nor will I have objectivity about my brother's film *Anastasia,* but if either of us can accomplish these things, I will consider our films a success. Please bear in mind this is the opinion of a man who's sources of reality are the Bible, The American Musical Comedy Theater, and animated cartoons. I'm sure that's because I've been a minister, I have done over a hundred stage musicals and I make my living in the wonderful world of animation.

Dear brother Don, good luck and break a leg. I want you to know that I love you and I am cheering for *Anastasia.*

We may all just be drops of water in the great sea of life, but some of the drops do sparkle. What a joy to work in a business like animation that is literally glittering with exceptional people.

Buena Vista Home Entertainment: A Very Lucky Accident Indeed

by Ilene Hoffman

This month, Walt Disney Pictures is releasing an all new animated film featuring those highly familiar characters Belle and her beloved Beast. But family audiences won't be flocking to multiplex theaters to witness this cinematic event; rather they'll be cozying up on overstuffed sofas to view the movie in the privacy of their own homes.

New characters re-animate a franchise in Disney's direct-to-video Beauty and the Beast:The Enchanted Christmas. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

This marriage of sequels to video is a new and very lucrative business for Disney, a watershed in home entertainment.

Forget the elaborate preshows at Disney's El Capitan Theater. Forget THX sound and a movie house full of delightfully screaming five year-olds and their parents. Forget also the long lines at the box office and the candy counter. With this latest release, Disney hopes to show that home video can hold its own with theatrical features.

"Years ago, direct-to-video was equated with something that was not good enough to be released in theaters, so it was just released on video," explains Robin Miller, the Head of Worldwide Product Development for Disney's home video division, Buena Vista Home Entertainment (BVHE). "Now videos can stand up alongside movies."

The History of Buena Vista Home Entertainment

In the early 1980s the home video industry was in its infancy. The preferred way to see a movie was still on the big screen. Would-be couch potatoes stood in long popcorn lines using their shiny, new VCRs primarily to record the television shows they were missing. Nearly two decades later, however, the home video business is booming, grossing $15 billion a year within the United States in both sell-through and rental properties. Disney seems to be leading the way. In fact, the company has the top video sale of all time — namely, *The Lion King* which sold over 30 million units.

According to Marcelle Abraham, Executive Director of Public Relations for BVHE, Disney pioneered the video sell-through business with the release of such classic films from the Disney vault as *Bambi, Mary Poppins,* and *Snow White* — films very few young people had seen on the big screen but could now enjoy in their own living rooms.

Direct-to-Video Sequels

Success with these products coupled with the video releases of more current, animated movies such as *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* soon gave way to the creation of direct-to-videos (or DTVs) — films created especially for release on video. Unlike their predecessors, these films would never even see the big screen, for Disney did not think they had to. "We launched our direct-to-video division with *The Return of Jafar*," states Cheryl Glenn, BVHE senior manager of public relations. "It was a happy accident that sold over 10 million units in the Spring of 1994."

Disney's mission in the direct-to-video business has been to capitalize on the consumers' desire to see their beloved characters in new stories and adventures.

The Return of Jafar was never intended to be a movie sequel to *Aladdin*. Rather, the story was composed of the first five episodes of the *Aladdin* animated television series produced by Walt Disney Television Animation. Because the episodes told a complete story in roughly 90 minutes, Disney decided to release them on video as a single movie. The success of this decision launched a new division within TV animation which develops and produces animated films specifically intended for direct-

to-video release.

As of now, the division has built on *Jafar's* precedent and primarily produced sequels to the recent animated features. This marriage of sequels to video is a new and very lucrative business for Disney, a watershed in home entertainment. As a result, Disney has now placed all of their feature animated properties — both old and new — into development as sequels. Miller believes this was a very smart business decision. "Feature Animation (the division that produces the big budget theatrical films) has tons of films in development. It is not their interest to create sequels to their films. We understand they don't want to do it, so we'll do it. And we have the full blessing of the feature animation group," she says.

The Return of Jafar was the "happy accident" that launched Disney's direct-to-video division. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

By employing sophisticated marketing strategies as well as promoting the videos' limited releases, Buena Vista Home Entertainment has created a sense of purchasing urgency in the minds of consumers.

Currently in production is a sequel to *The Lion King* titled *Simba's Pride* and a sequel to *Pocahontas* titled *Journey to a New World*. On August 5, Disney released *Pooh's Grand Adventure, The Search for Christopher Robin* which Sharon Morrill, Vice President of Direct-to-Videos at Walt Disney Television Animation, describes as the studio's first unique direct-to-video product. "Winnie the Pooh has never had a long form story told before," she states. "Even if it was a feature length movie, the feature length movie was comprised of three short stories. But this is the first time Winnie the Pooh has ever been told in a longer 65 minute format."

Christmas Belle

Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas is the latest direct-to-video incarnation from Buena Vista Home Entertainment. A "midquel," this holiday story takes place in the middle of the original film, after the Beast rescues Belle from the menacing wolf pack but before he gifts her with the gigantic library.

"It tells more of how the Beast became a beast, what happened on that particular Christmas," reveals Miller. A new villain, a fully computer-generated, evil pipe organ named Forte, voiced by Tim Curry, has become the Beast's confidant and feels threatened by his master's growing relationship with Belle. "Forte doesn't want the beast to become human again because he feels he won't need him anymore, that he'll just be a mediocre court composer," Miller explains. To ensure his high status, Forte plots to rid the castle of Belle and thus, sever her relationship with the Beast.

While we know from the original movie that Belle and the Beast will eventually live happily ever after, *The Enchanted Christmas* gives audiences another opportunity to spend time with characters they have come to know and love. Thus far, Disney's mission in the direct-to-video business has been to capitalize on the consumers' desire to see their cherished characters in new stories and adventures. "We look at a property like *Beauty and the Beast*, we look at all the letters that kids have written us and decide that we need to create a whole new movie that reprises the original characters and bring this out on video," Miller says. "The videos are really based on the Disney characters that audiences hold dear."

For Miller and Morrill, *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas* is a testament to the high quality and huge appeal these videos hold. The project has attracted back all of the members of the original voice cast as well as such star newcomers as Curry, Bernadette Peters and Paul Rubens.

Paige O'Hara who returns as the voice of Belle, feels this new film is just as exciting and appealing as the first. "I used to joke that the title should really be called *Indiana Belle* because the story is really an action-adventure," says O'Hara. "Belle almost gets killed twice. It's a lot of fun. And it was very exciting to be back again. I think this film is going

Disney's August release of Pooh's Grand Adventure: The Search for Christopher Robin marks the first time that the Winnie the Pooh character has ever been shown in a longer, 65 minute format story. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

to be terrific."

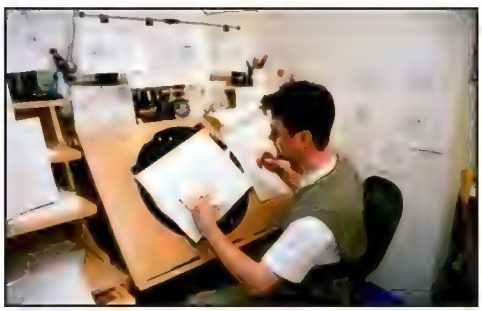
Other direct-to-video projects, *Aladdin and the King of Thieves* (released August, 1996) and a future sequel to *Toy Story,* have lured back their original voice talents as well. Robin Williams again provided the voice for the outrageous Genie, while Tom Hanks and Tim Allen will reprise their vocal roles of dolls Woody and Buzz Lightyear respectively.

In addition to top-notch voice talent, the videos have also drawn the cream of the crop in terms of writers, composers and lyricists. According to Morrill, some of the projects feature Grammy Award-winning lyricists and Academy Award-winning composers and songwriters. Rachel Portman, who composed the music for *The Enchanted Christmas,* won this year's Academy Award for her score of *Emma*.

Morrill believes that several factors are responsible for attracting star talent to direct-to-video projects. "I think it's partly Disney, partly it's Disney animation and partly, it is an attraction to the actual property," she remarks. "Maybe someone loved *Beauty and the Beast,* or they loved *The Little Mermaid,* or loved *The Lion King* and they'd love to work on the sequel. It gives them a chance to put their stamp on the property. Plus, a lot of them have children and they want to be able to do something for their kids."

Director Andy Knight (pointing) and Layout Director Ricardo Durante review a Beauty and the Beast:The Enchanted Christmas storyboard at Disney's Canada Studio. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

While children appear to be the target audience for the videos, Morrill cautions against viewing the films as solely designed for youngsters. Like the theatrical animated features, Disney's direct-to-videos are intended to delight everybody. "People always ask, 'what's your audience?'," says Morrill. "I think people always think we're catering to children. We're not catering to just children. It's definitely family entertainment. A great story will translate to all ages, from the grandparent all the way to the young child."



Inbetweening animator Troy Quane works at Disney's Canada Studio, on a scene for Beauty and the Beast:The Enchanted Christmas. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

Production Quality

Disney assures that the quality of *The Enchanted Christmas* and other direct-to-video releases is equal to other studios' theatrical animation. A large part of this is due to the talented animators and artists who produce the films at Disney's wholly-owned animation studios overseas. The company currently has three studios: one in Japan, one in Australia and the newest one in Canada with dual locations in Vancouver and Toronto. *Simba's Pride* is being produced in Australia, while *Pocahontas: The Journey to a New World* is primarily being made in Japan, "although there are a couple of other studios that are also helping out," adds Morrill.

Originally, the three overseas animation studios were designed to produce the company's animated television series. But with direct-to-video being high on the priority list, Australia, Japan and Canada are now producing feature-length films. The Canadian studio produced *The Enchanted Christmas* in just 16 months, a real record considering most theatrical animated features can take anywhere between three and five years to complete. The shorter schedule is due primarily to the fact that the direct-to-video sequels do not start from scratch. Characters and background designs are already available from the original movies.

"We take advantage of the research that was already done by Feature Animation," says Laurel Whitcomb, Vice President of Publicity for Walt Disney Television Animation. "For *Simba's Pride* we don't have to first design Pride Rock. It's already been done." Whitcomb believes that once the overseas animation studios begin work on original direct-to-video properties (properties which are not based on existing Disney characters), the production schedule may stretch. As of now, Disney direct-to-video has 45 films in development, some of which are original projects. Morrill hopes to start production on their first original production sometime next year.

Audience Appeal

Naturally, the studio expects that these new features will be as popular as the classics, that families will want to own them as much as they want to own *Cinderella* or *Pinocchio.* Purchasing, and thereby owning, the Disney classics has become "a habit for consumers," says Abraham. "Children watch them over and over again."

Miller feels that the videos enable audiences to treasure the Disney classics. "Adults and kids feel that they are viewing something that is very special," she says. But there is more behind the success of Disney home videos than the mere collecting of treasures. By employing sophisticated marketing strategies as well as promoting the videos' limited releases, Buena Vista Home Entertainment has created a sense of purchasing urgency in the minds of consumers.

Miller asserts that like the theatrical blockbusters, video releases need to be viewed as events. It is not enough to place a videotape in a nicely illustrated box and hope that people will flock to the nearest chain department store to buy it. Rather, says Miller, "We create boxed sets for videophiles who enjoy collecting. We create events with mass media advertising and tie-ins, TV advertising, print and billboard. We do whatever is necessary."

Just as films will not be out in the theaters forever, so Disney videos cannot adorn the shelves of video stores indefinitely. According to Miller, the limited release of the videos is not merely the by-product of a clever marketing campaign, nor is it directly intended to threaten consumers, forcing them to purchase something *now* rather than later. Instead, the limited release is simply due to the studio's moratorium policy on animated classics. A Disney animated film will make its usual run of theatrical to video and then go into the vault for seven years to be released again when a new generation of two to seven year-olds emerges.

A Disney animated film will make its usual run of theatrical to video and then go into the vault for seven years to be released again when a new generation of two to seven year-olds emerges.

"*The Little Mermaid* is a great example of this," cites Abraham. "It came out on video in the Spring of 1990. Now there's a whole new generation of young people who haven't seen it." Disney is re-releasing *The Little Mermaid* this month in theaters in celebration of its tenth theatrical anniversary. Audiences can be sure it will hit the video stores again shortly thereafter. According to Miller, there are a lot of people out there who do not own a copy of this film and can't wait to get their hands on it.

While the re-release of *The Little Mermaid* appears timely and strategically planned, most of the Disney classics are not re-released on a systematic basis. Just recently, consumers had the opportunity to purchase *Bambi* and *Sleeping Beauty* in that order. Now *The Jungle Book* is available. To the average consumer, this seems fairly random, and Miller assures "there's not a science to it."

In selecting which classic film to make available at any given time, Miller explains that Disney "looks at the library, the competition, what appeals to audiences. It's not an exact science. We have to examine every factor in the market place. It would be easier if it were more formulaic. A lot of analysis goes into the releases."

Its Own Art Form

As one of the largest divisions in the Walt Disney Company and also one of the largest revenue-generating divisions, Buena Vista Home Entertainment continues to legitimize home video as an art form in and of itself, not just as a natural stage in the life of a theatrical release. "Years ago we were in the movie-distributing business," Miller says. "We still are, but now we're also in the movie-making business."

Will videos ever replace the big screen? Miller doesn't think so. "There is no replacement for being in a theater screaming with 300 other people just as there is no replacement for cuddling up in front of the television in your furry slippers, fast-forwarding to the favorite parts and turning the film on and off at your leisure," she says. "There's the intimacy of the home experience and there's the social experience of the theater."

Like Belle and the Beast who learn to get along in the castle, theatrical and video releases can coexist. "There's an appetite for both," assures Miller, "and that's really wonderful."

Ilene Hoffman was most recently Director of Development for Turner Feature Animation, having worked on the film Cats Don't Dance. *Prior to Turner, she was Manager of Development, Motion Pictures at Hanna-Barbera Cartoons. Ilene earned her B.A. in English literature from Brown University. She is now writing for film and television while pursuing a Masters in English at Middlebury College.*

Life Cycle of DVD

by Russell Bekins

Our intrepid reporter recently stumbled into a copy of *The Art of War* by Sun Tsu, abandoned, no doubt, by some consumer electronics manufacturer overcome by a momentary attack of ethics at this year's COMDEX convention in Las Vegas. It had the following notes scribbled inside the cover:

1. Develop my new "killer application."
2. Battle to get others to adopt my standard; develop allies.
3. Prepare for the counter-attack of competing products or standards.
4. Launch my application (or compromise) with vigorous campaigning.
5. Quietly abandon my old standard.
6. Develop new "killer application."

At the dawn of the era of the "home theater," DVD set-top boxes are being touted as the greatest home entertainment invention since sex.

"5 years" was written below it on the page, and underlined twice. We believe that this is undoubtedly the smoking gun to a new industry conspiracy. Read on if you dare.

Toshiba's SD-W1001 DVD-RAM player and disks. ©Toshiba.

Now Appearing In A Store Near You

The event that video aficionados and multimedia geeks have been anticipating for two years finally happened this year. Digital Versatile Disc players finally appeared in stores, with their crisp quality and superior sound. CD-sized movies are being sold in music and video stores, at a cost slightly above sell-through VHS titles (about $20 - $30) with quality as good as or better than laser disc. At the dawn of the era of the "home theater," DVD set-top boxes are being touted as the greatest home entertainment invention since sex.

What they won't tell you about the DVD player now for sale is that it may just be an interim technology. Though the format has been in discussion for several years, and is likely to be around for a while, changes are coming, and savvy consumers are wary.

Stage One: The Killer App Migrates

Years ago, when the CD standard had just begun, consumer electronics giants Sony and Philips were able to enforce their patents on the medium, and now make a penny or so on every CD made in the world. Every new technology since that time has been an attempt to find the new paradigm that will follow this incredibly lucrative model. It has led to some huge boondoggles, some perfectly amazing industry catfights, and some very angry consumers (see archeological chart).

Stage Two: Pax Toshiba

The DVD format which has finally emerged after years of development and bitter format battles is the war-child of harrowing write-offs for hardware developers. It was

developed partly by Toshiba, and negotiated by an exclusive club of bickering consumer electronics manufacturers known as the DVD Consortium (affectionately referred to as the "Gang of Ten"). The format uses a video compression standard known as MPEG2, and most movies made for this standard will include high-quality Dolby A3 sound channels. The resulting quality is generally acknowledged to be as good or better than laser discs when the digital compression and mastering is done right. However, the rush to get a few of the early titles out and into the stores has generated more than a few poorly-mastered demonstration discs.

Since everyone has agreed

Toshiba's SD2107 and SD3107 DVD players. ©Toshiba.

on the same format and will be producing essentially the same product (the assumption goes), economy of scale will kick in. Prices on the machines will drop to the point where they're affordable. Movie titles will be available at competitive costs and take up less room under your television set.

"But wait a bit," the cynics cry. "This thing does not replace my VCR. It does not record my favorite television shows, nor is it likely to in the foreseeable future. I hear all these things about competing technologies. Why should I buy one of these overpriced machines now?"

Good question.

Failed Formats Aren't Such A Bad Thing After All

Unless you've had a garage sale recently, you probably have some relic of abandoned standards sitting idle somewhere around your house. Got a Betamax tape player? A last-generation Mac or IBM compatible? A CD-I or 3DO player? A DAT tape machine? If you have children, you almost certainly have a disused Nintendo SNES or Sega system sitting around. (For a complete list of dead formats and their frightening consequences, see archeological chart). Surprisingly, it is those abandoned cart games that have provided the new marketing model for the consumer electronics industry.

As formats came and went, the consumer electronics industry was casting about for "economic models" that allow them to launch and develop platforms with a degree of economic comfort. They seem to have found that model in the gaming industry. As Sony PlayStation and Nintendo 64 went though the roof, consumer electronics executives began to realize that consumers would tolerate new standards if they were launched with enough sizzle. Both George Harrison of Nintendo, and Gretchen Eichinger of Sega bluntly assessed the ideal life cycle of a gaming platform at five to six years at the most recent E3 Expo in Atlanta. Sony's Phil Harrison came closest to the issue when he hinted that "this notion of life cycles is as much the industry's self-imposed issue as the consumer's own desire to buy the latest, greatest thing."

This "self-imposed issue" is even more apparent in the computer industry, where the obsolescence of products is down in the range of two to three years. "Intel aggressively funds projects that require better processing power," inventor Bing McCoy reminds us. "They think about what applications will have an appetite for performance." A new corporate ethos is growing increasingly comfortable with adopting and dumping standards in shorter and shorter cycles. The famous doubling of computing power every 18 months is not just a marvel of technology; it's a marvel of consumer swindling.

What they won't tell you about the DVD player now for sale is that it may just be an interim technology.

In this environment, the industry has decided to launch DVD, knowing full well that the format, as presently configured, might well have only a five or six year life span. Actually, the current DVD format may last only a year or two, thanks to the introduction of a new DVD format: DIVX.

Stage Three: Just When You Thought It Was Safe To Return To Circuit City...

DIVX is a recently announced new standard of DVD sponsored by the electronics retail chain store Circuit City, due out some time next year. It offers some distinct advantages for the large studios who have been hesitant to step into the business; it's designed to discourage piracy. The list of copy protection reads like that of the new $100 US bill: watermarking, encrypting, and analog copy protection. Indeed, the cost for this new DVD format will set you back one of those tough-to-counterfeit bills on top of the cost of the current set-top boxes.

But wait, there's more. Much, much, much more. DIVX will enable consumers to rent movies by buying a disc, which they can play for 48 hours, then it expires.

Want to watch it again? The machine will modem up the company and charge a credit card account for an additional fee. Wanna buy it? Charge by modem and watch it as many times as wanted. DIVX discs will not play on current "open" DVD players.

Confused? Many industry analysts think consumers will be, but DIVX is confident they'll catch on. "Consumers are smart," waxes Mary Lou Hotsko of Bender, Goldman & Helper, the publicity firm for DIVX. "Once the product is explained, they'll get it." Actually, it's a paradigm that long-time computer users would understand immediately. "It's basically the same as shareware on a disc," says Judy Anderson, executive director of the Optical Video Disc Association. "I loved my experience with being able to buy a program over the phone that was already in my computer as without having to go back to the store or download." The studios also love all this protection and the ability to sell directly to the public; more than half of them have signed on.

Predictably, DIVX has generated a storm of indignation. "It's another misstep in this very confused product launch," Chris McGowan, author of *Entertainment in the Cyber Zone,* says diplomatically. John Thrasher, Vice President of Video Sales for Tower Records/Video was even more blunt when speaking to *Video Business Magazine:* "From my perspective, it's just another failed format waiting to happen." It's no surprise that companies like Tower and Blockbuster should oppose this new standard; video rental businesses make extraordinary amounts of money on overdue videos, and don't like the notion of studios cutting out the middle man by selling videos over the telephone lines.

While few consumers are likely to shed tears over the decline of the video rental business, the confusion and competition over DVD and DIVX is likely to slow the launch of the DVD standard.

Stage Four: Beware The Ideas Of Christmas

Toshiba and Warners plan a $30 million holiday advertising blitz, including television, print, POP (point of purchase — those stand-up cardboard monsters in your video store) and ads on all Warner Videos one may happen to rent or buy. Some of these ads are already out on video cassettes; they feature a family nearly blown out of their seats by their own DVD-driven home theater system. The appeal of these ads is clearly toward younger audiences. The spot emulates the mind-numbing visceral quality of gaming platform television advertisements that have aired over the last few years.

'But wait a bit,' the cynics cry. 'This thing does not replace my VCR. It does not record my favorite television shows...'

Other companies are getting into the act; most studios plan releases of DVD movies for Christmas. Ingram and Toshiba have partnered for demonstration kiosks in retail outlets, and Philips has joined with Polygram in a similar venture. Even Buena Vista, who has announced that they will release their Disney animation classics only on DIVX, is hedging their bets by releasing some movies on DVD.

Videophiles, those "early adopters" that the industry relies on, may just sit this Christmas season out. They are justifiably leery when every month brings news of a fresh advance. "I'm happy with my laser disc," says prototypical early adopter Josh Catalfo, of Davis, California, indicating that he has no intentions of buying a set-top DVD in the immediate future. "I'm going to wait on DIVX and see if they improve the mastering quality." Clearly, the consumer electronics industry has not factored in the fact that early adopters are among the best informed buyers.

Christmas can be deadly to consumer electronics when expectations are hyped. CD-ROM pioneer and leading developer Jerry Borell reminds us of last year's debacle for the CD-ROM market. "Eighteen wheel trucks were returning (the software) in droves," he points out. "Software suppliers didn't pay the developers or paid them pennies on the dollar. Going into this season there are unpaid debts from last year." While it can be argued that the diffused CD-ROM industry is fundamentally different from a mass market, the lesson is a sober argument not to put all the eggs in one basket.

"I hope the industry and public will be realistic and give the industry a couple of years," worries Tonya Bates of VideoScan.

Stage Five: Laser Rot

For those not familiar with the term, laser rot is what happens when moisture gets between the layers of a laser disc, damaging or ruining the picture quality. It is the metaphorical equivalent of what has happened to this once viable market of videophiles and the 9,000 titles available to them. "A lot of people are really hurting," admits Judy Anderson of the Optical Video Disc Association, once the standards organization for the market.

Where Are These People Buying Their Crystal Balls?

Given the fact that the wars are not over, it's hard to see where the market will be in five years, much less make any predictions. Nevertheless, the industry has generated a virtual hailstorm of felicitous predictions without factoring in the idea that a competing standard would be announced just as DVD was launched.

MGM is re-releasing two animated titles on DVD this month: How The Grinch Stole Christmas and Horton Hears A Who. © 1997 MGM Home Entertainment.

The happy industry statistics promise the holy grail of all new formats: an economy of scale. A report by Wall Street analyst Sanford Berenstein & Company, summarized in *Video Business Magazine,* speaks glowingly of "early adopters" of new technology. They predict that those videophiles who thrill to the "latest, greatest thing" will spring to the fore and latch on to the quality of this new medium. It also spoke of an increase of as much as ten points in the stocks of major studios due to this new revenue stream.

A Disney animated film will make its usual run of theatrical to video and then go into the vault for seven years to be released again when a new generation of two to seven year-olds emerges.

This is only one in many hyper-optimistic reports. Time-Warner is predicting that ten million DVD video players will be sold in the U.S. in the next five years; C-Cube estimates that there will be one million DVD players and drives by the end of 1997; and Infotech projects 840,000 DVD video players will be sold in the first year. Though industry figures on numbers are an arcane science to say the least, industry watchers are dubious. "I don't know where they're getting these numbers from," said one industry analyst, declining to be named.

Perhaps a good test of these prognostications might be their own prediction for the number of software units that will be sold in 1998: it stands at 36.7 million. VideoScan, an independent industry organization which tallies sales of DVD software, said that only 382,000 units had been sold through September 15, 1997. Even given a wonderful Christmas, the industry will be hard-pressed to go through an almost hundred-fold increase in 15 months.

In all fairness, there may be surprises. VideoScan monitors only the numbers from retail outlets, not such non-traditional sources as mail-order houses. Could it be that pornography will lift this business in the same way that it boosted the VHS market?

The greatest danger to the DVD standard is likely to be created by the industry itself: hype, and its evil twin, disappointment. "I think DVD will have almost zero impact in any area this Christmas," worries developer Kathy Kozel, "and that may really knock out DVD ROM."

Stage Six: Upgrade Or Die, The Coming Of DVD ROM

You foot draggers out there who moan with each computer upgrade you're forced into should get plenty of angst over whether to budget for a DVD ROM in the coming year or two. Described as basically a large CD ROM, DVD ROM uses formatting and layering techniques to deliver vast amounts more information on a CD sized disc.

Let's make it simple: wait.

At first it seemed that the good news for consumers was that the bewildering array of video accelerator and sound cards, faster central processing units, and various compression engines have reached a plateau with the Pentium 2, MPEG2 video compression and A3 audio standards. However, let's not cheer too soon.

The issue of how content is organized on DVD ROM is in the hands of the Software Publisher's Association. This is apparently not as easy as it seems; issues of "backwards compatibility" with CD-ROMS and the continuing wars between hardware and software manufacturers continue to dog their work. Recently, Intel sponsored a conference through the Software Publisher's Association where hardware and software manufacturers met to try out their products on each other. The results were dismal. Don't look for plug and play capability from DVD ROMs for some time to come. Technology consultant and moderator of the most recent Software Publishers Association DVD forum Geoff Tully, points out that it will be awhile before DVD ROM are good for anything other than information retrieval. "As long as it's a bit bucket, it is only useful for transporting bits around." Tully commented, adding that the playback software is likely to be Microsoft's Direct Show that will operate in "Memphis" — the next Windows environment from Microsoft. At last report, Memphis was due out next summer, but don't hold your breath.

[Interestingly, the e-mail between members of this group (or rather, its precursor, the Interactive Multimedia Association) finds Tully railing about a five year "life cycle" of a platform. Tully points out that such transitory formats make life impossible for software publishers.]

From an upcoming LucasArts DVD ROM game. © LucasArts.

Even without these standards, title developers are releasing on this platform. The early offerings seem to be video-content heavy CD-ROM publishers like The Discovery Channel, who is planning to bring out their successful *Animal Planet* and other titles on the new medium. Tsunami has slogged through a pioneering experiment in interactive movie-making with *Silent Steel* (though the latter was a demonstration of the rejected MPEG1 standard) and plans a sequel. These companies are apparently grateful that someone has found a platform which presents full-motion video in a full-screen, quality format. The game-makers are jumping in as well. Westwood Studios is releasing *Command and Conquer* in the new format.

Don't look for a bevy of wildly creative new concepts from smaller companies right away, however. "The first wave of titles for the industry will be ports of older products," says Steve Dauterman, Director of Development for Lucas Arts. "This is very similar to the transition that happened when we moved from floppy disc to CD ROM." He adds that the new medium will help them with games that they ship on multiple CD-ROMs; they can now be shipped on a single DVD. Even considering the relative ease of porting products over to a new medium, however, Lucas Arts is taking a wait-and-see approach. "We're historically late adopters," shrugs Tom Sarris, Public Relations Manager for Lucas Arts, declining to name or date their first offering. "It may be 2-3 years."

Media watchers are generally sanguine about the prospects of DVD ROM in the years to come. "I think it's a solid upgrade for the computer," nods author Chris McGowan. "It's like a teenager," shrugged a systems analyst working for a major retailer, pointing to the lack of content for the new DVD ROM kits now available, "lots of potential, but no place to put it." Certainly, until the Software Developers Association (Gang of Ten: The Return?) publishes their authoring standards, or Microsoft releases Memphis and Direct Show, there is no reason to buy a DVD ROM.

But, no one in the industry is sweating that. The general hoopla for DVD ROM is scheduled for Christmas next year. Somewhere, in a cold and quiet corner of a north-

ern toy factory, Santa Claus must be weeping.

The Battles Continue: DVD RAM, DVD ROM, And Bandwidth

About all we can do here is define these terms and give a rough idea of why they make it tough to buy a DVD or DVD ROM this year. The developments in these formats are in the battle stage, and about as tough to track and report on as, say, the developments in Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia.

DVD R, otherwise known as the "WORM" (Write Once Read Many) drive, will be a useful tool for industrial training, "one off" demonstration products, and educational purposes. These are DVD sized drives with the capability of recording to a disc one time only. DVD R drives will likely be of minimal utility for the average consumer.

A Disney animated film will make its usual run of theatrical to video and then go into the vault for seven years to be released again when a new generation of two to seven year-olds emerges.

DVD RAM, capable of being written to, erased, and recorded over many times. Hollywood Studios are about as receptive to recordable DVD's as Disney might be to a porno film featuring Mickey Mouse. The hardware companies, having just settled on a standard for DVD, are bashing each other again over this new format. See "Stage Two."

BANDWIDTH, or the issue of whether cable companies will be able to deliver full-motion video over fiber optic networks, is a question that seriously bedevils this industry. If you can play *Command and Conquer* against someone in Omaha at a fraction of the cost of a computer with an MPEG2 card and DVD ROM, why should you buy a DVD drive at all?

The Good News For Developers

In the past, the companies who brought out new platforms were in a panic to get developers to make products for their standard. Philips, for example, sponsored a Hollywood studio-like arrangement with up-and-coming content providers like Sidewalk Studios for their CD-I platform. There may be similar deals to come when DVD ROM hits the market.

Even if the big manufacturers should decide to sit on their wallets and let the studios fill out the content in these new formats, several potential revenue streams for animators, animation houses, and 3D graphics houses should open up. One example is the success of Odyssey Productions, whose popular *Mind's Eye* videos and collections of computer animations are now available on DVD. Additionally, the re-publishing of classic titles on DVD and DVD ROM should give new cash to struggling production companies to fund new projects.

Economic Democracy In Action

The glory of this whole process is that we get a vote. When we buy into a technology, we inherently reject one platform for another. My advice: sit tight.

It's not a good idea to buy an early DVD set-top machine unless you have $500 just burning a hole in your pocket. In the short term, DIVX may well take off next year and become an addition to the average machine, just as Dolby stereo became integral to cassette machines years ago. In the longer term, the broadcasters must settle their questions about High Density television, and specialized lasers need to be developed that will be compatible with this format. Finally, the growth in video on demand, Web TV, and fiber-optic networks (which promise to deliver full-motion video and interactivity) might well provide whatever application you were going to use that DVD for at a more reasonable price.

On the other hand, consumers are certainly subsidizing the growth of technology. If you feel that process is important, go and vote for the consumer electronics manufacturer of your choice. Perhaps, if the "trickle down" theory works, you'll be supporting a whole new generation of innovators, inventors, and artists. Then again, you might just be contributing to a vicious cycle.

For a humorous look at the history of failed technologies, take a look at Russell Bekins' illustrative charts, "Archeological Discoveries: The Year 3050," and "The Great Wrestling Match," only in the HTML version of this issue of *Animation World Magazine.*

Russell Bekins is a writer and media and story analyst working in Hollywood. He has worked for such film companies as MGM, Tri-Star, CAA and labored mightily (not to mention fruitlessly) as a development executive at Disney-based Tidewater Entertainment. Most recently he has written for a satirical website, Betacapsule.com, detailing the despair of a small high-tech company.

Animation to Go:

New Home Video Releases

by Wendy Jackson

It's the season for animated home videos....and plenty of them. From theatrical re-releases and re-packaged television content, to original direct-to-video fare, the relatively young home video market is booming. Distributors increasingly find themselves competing not only with each other, but with other venues of entertainment. With the veritable cornucopia of animated fare currently on cable television and in theaters, it's tough to get kids' attention at this time of year.

This fall, home video distributors will spend hundreds of millions of dollars on television and newspaper advertising, most of it aimed towards gift-buying parents. Tie-ins, rebates and cross-promotions catch consumers in daily life, with a wave of restaurant, grocery store, shopping mall, airline and even elementary school partnerships. Going for those point-of-purchase sales, many distributors are even offering toys attached to packaging, and elaborate in-store displays with coloring books, buttons and posters.

This month, we sat down with a crate full of video tapes and a bowl of popcorn to explore this market. Here's a sampling of the latest new animated home video offerings, and a sneak peek at what's coming soon to a video store near you.

What's New

Babes in Toyland

The first feature-length animated musical adaptation of the classic book, *Babes in Toyland* is a fun and charming twist on classic nursery rhyme tales. Based on the operetta by Victor Herbert and the book by Toby Bluth, *Babes in Toyland* tells the story of cherubic orphans Jack and Jill (of went-up-the-hill fame), and their adventure to save "Toyland" from their own Gargamel-esque, crotchety uncle Barnaby. With its surreal, vividly colorful animation of various anthropomorphic toys, machines, tableware and even a cow jumping over a talking moon, the film is worth watching for the visuals alone. If that's not enough of an incentive, get it to hear the character voices by James Belushi, Jonathan Dern and even Charles Nelson Reilly.

Babes in Toyland. © 1997 MGM Home Entertainment.

The film is a remarkable accomplishment, in that it is the first made for home video title from MGM's three year-old animation production division, MGM Animation. Their first two titles, *All Dogs Go To Heaven I* and *II,* had theatrical runs before their respective home video releases. Premiering on video last month, *Babes in Toyland* was co-directed by Charles Grosvernor, Toby Bluth and Paul Sabella (Sabella served as one of four co-producers as well). In addition, Toby Bluth served as production designer, and his book, *Babes in Toyland,* provided a style guide for the film; and, yes, he is the brother of director Don Bluth whose Anastasia is released theatrically this month.

Pippi Longstocking

Many generations will recognize Pippi Longstocking, the spunky, red-headed nine year-old girl in striped socks and pigtails. Since her mother is an angel, and her father is a rarely-seen seafaring pirate, she lives in her father's house, with her pet horse and monkey, using her super strength, singing and taking what she needs from the overflowing chest of gold in the attic. Pippi's irreverent, creative character shines when her carefree lifestyle is cramped by two bum-

Pippi Longstocking. © 1997 AB Svensk/Idunafilm/Nelvana/Trickompany.

bling bad guys attempting to steal her gold. Meanwhile a nosy town busybody, Mrs. Prysselius, tries to send her to a "children's home." The first full-length animated musical feature based on the classic children's book by Astrid Lindgren, the film features five original songs which are not very inspired. However, one in particular does really stick in your head, "Hello, I'm Pippi!"

Pippi Longstocking was released in U.S. movie theaters starting in August, and will be released in video stores on November 25. The film is a co-production between Nelvana (Canada), AB Svensk Filmindustri (Sweden), Iduna Produktiongesellschaft GmbH & Co and TFC Trickompany Filmproduktion GmbH (Germany). It was directed by Clive Smith, co-founder of Nelvana, a company known for masterminding complicated co-productions, and for adapting children's books into animated properties. With three studios, nine producers and the book's original author, who turns 90 years-old this month, involved in the production, keeping *Pippi* on track was no small task. "It was very complicated, not just from a production point of view, but also from a creative point of view," said director Clive Smith. "In fact, we had production going on in about 12 different cities. I was literally running around the world for three years!"

Nelvana has recently expanded to include a feature films division, headed by supervising producer Merle Anne Risley. The studio's next project is *Babar: King of the Elephants,* a direct-to-video title slated for completion in 1998. Several other films are currently in development.

The Land Before Time V: The Mysterious Island

Lost your calendar? The sequential releases of *The Land Before Time* videos can almost serve as a measurement of the passing time. It's hard to believe that a whole year has gone by since the last one was released. In December, the fourth direct-to-video sequel to Steven Spielberg's 1988 animated theatrical feature, *The Land Before Time,* will be released directly to home video. So far, the six-title franchise (which includes a *Sing-Along-Songs* title) has amassed consumer sales of over $480 million. The character design in these films is an accomplishment in itself, in that dinosaurs, which are more or less giant prehistoric lizards, can be depicted as so, well, cute and cuddly.

The Land Before Time: The Mysterious Island takes us on a toddler adventure with the little tyke dinosaurs Chomper, Littlefoot, and friends. After "swarming leaf gobblers" devour the food supply, the entire dinosaur clan embarks on a journey in search of food. The animation in this film is quite good, with full movement and expressive characters. Universal's producer/director Charles Grosvernor and Overseas Animation Supervisor Richard Forgues worked with their US staff and Akom Productions in Korea. Additional work was contracted to Galaxy World (Korea), Inventaria (Spain), Funbag Animation Studios (Canada) and Heart of Texas (USA). The film includes three new songs music scored by Michael Tavera, to lyrics by Michele Brourman and Amanda McBroom, who also scored the previous *Land Before Time* titles.

Beauty and Beast: The Enchanted Christmas

It's no wonder that Disney chose the Beauty and the Beast franchise as the next direct-to-video project. Just in theatrical grosses alone, the original animated feature topped $350 million worldwide, and, to date, the film is the only animated feature ever nominated for a Best Picture Academy Award. The all new, direct-to-video *Beauty and*

The Land Before Time V: The Mysterious Island. © Universal Studios Home Video.

Forte, the evil organ in Beauty and the Beast:The Enchanted Christmas. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas was directed by Andy Knight and produced at Disney's facilities in Vancouver and Toronto. Disney Australia handled some animation and inbetweening as well as clean-up, checking, and digital ink and paint on Toon Boom software. Wang Film Productions created additional backgrounds, and additional animation was contracted to Chuck Gammage Animation and Character Builders.

Freshness is added to the story with three new characters: Angelique, a treetop ornament (voiced by Bernadette Peters), Forte, an evil pipe organ (Tim Curry) and Fife, an insecure piccolo (Paul Reubens, formerly known as Pee Wee Herman). All the other characters are voiced by the same actors as appeared in the first theatrical film.

Annabelle's Wish. © 1997 Ralph Edwards Films.

Annabelle's Wish

This direct-to-video Christmas story takes the cake for the number of cross-promotional tie-ins, but loses points with low quality animation and a cloyingly sweet story that is more tedious than heartwarming. But, as any good marketer will tell you, *Annabelle's Wish* is likely to sell plenty of units.

An association with the charitable Make-A-Wish Foundation, and a bevy of promotional tie-ins make *Annabelle's Wish* the consumer-friendliest title of the season. Based on a short story by Dan Henderson, the film tells the story of a mute, orphaned little farm boy, whose wish is to speak, and a baby cow named Annabelle, whose wish is to be one of Santa's Reindeer. The boy's wicked aunt (vaguely reminiscent of Cruella DeVil) and a handful of local bullies challenge the magic of the Christmas season, but in the end, their wishes do come true.

This is the first animated film from independent producer Ralph Edwards Films, the newly formed division of Ralph Edwards Productions, producer of television shows such as *This is Your Life* and *The People's Court*. The film was animated by Studio City, California-based Baer Animation, a contract studio which does both feature (*Who Framed Roger Rabbit?, The Lion King*) and commercial work.

Scooby Doo Goes to Hollywood

Scooby Doo Goes to Hollywood is an older Hanna-Barbera television production from the studio's doldrum days. Since acquiring the rights from the Turner library, the film is being released on

Scooby Doo Goes to Hollywood. © 1997 Warner Bros. Home Video.

video for the first time through Warner Bros. Home Video division. In the film, Shaggy serves as Scooby's agent, shopping the clumsy dog around Hollywood, with some great parodies such as *The Sound of Scooby* and *Scooby's Angels*. Zoinks! If only poor Scooby really did have an agent, maybe Warner Bros. would have kept this film in the vault, where it belongs.

Mice of the Jungle, one of two Pinky and the Brain titles making its way from television to video this month. ©Warner Bros. Home Video.

Brand Spanking New Doug's Secret Christmas. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

Pinky and the Brain: Mice of the Jungle and Cosmic Attractions

Everyone's favorite caged-in lab mice, Pinky and the Brain can now take over your VCR. These two titles are the first re-released episodes of Steven Spielberg's popular Warner Bros. television series, *Pinky and the Brain,* to be released on video. With such a large base of existing fans, these should sell well in the holiday season.

Brand Spanking New Doug's Secret Christmas

Twelve year-old Doug Funnie is so wholesome, that he will be pictured on millions of milk containers distributed in schools this year. A clever licensing partnership between Disney Television and International Papers Liquid Packaging division will promote the animated character in elementary lunchrooms across the U.S.

In this re-release of a 1996 Christmas special, Doug and his dog Porkchop celebrate Christmas their own way when the family decides not to make a big deal of the holiday. *Doug's Secret Christmas* will also air on December 13, as part of a special *Brand Spanking New Doug* matinee program block on ABC. Produced by Disney-owned Jumbo Pictures, *Doug* started out as a series on Nickelodeon, before he was "Brand Spanking New."

What's Coming Soon...

Fern Gully II:The Magic Continues. © FAI Films/Rosen Harper Entertainment.

FernGully II: The Magic Continues

Five years after Bill and Sue Kroyer's animated feature, *Fern Gully: The Last Rainforest,* a sequel is finally on the way. The direct-to-video release is being produced by FAI Films and Rosen Harper Entertainment, with funding by CBS/Fox and Banque Paribas. Currently in production at the two year-old animation studio, Wild Brain in San Francisco, the film is slated for release in March, 1998.

Hercules and Xena: The Battle for Mount Olympus

Universal Television's live-action (and they mean *action*) series *Hercules: Legendary Journeys* and *Xena: Warrior Princess* are tremendously popular with each being syndicated in more than 15 countries worldwide. Universal Studios Consumer Products Group has a huge line of *Hercules* and *Xena* licensed merchandise on the market and even Universal Studios Florida is home to an interactive attraction based on the characters. Now, Universal Home Video is bringing the two super-heroes together in their first animated project, a direct-to-video feature called *Hercules and Xena: The Battle for Mount Olympus.*

Currently in production in the U.S. and Korea by Universal Cartoon Studios, the film is being produced and directed by Lynne Naylor, who has worked at Filmation, Hanna-Barbera, Marvel, Spumco and Warner Bros. The script was written by John P. Loy, who has penned numerous scripts for animated television series such as Porchlight Entertainment's *The Book of Virtues* and Warner Bros.' *Pinky and the Brain* before entering a multi-year deal with Universal Cartoon Studios to write, develop and produce animated projects.

Hercules and Xena:The Animated Movie. © Universal Studios Home Video.

Originally slated for a mid-October release, the film has been pushed back to January, where it will face fewer competitors, but will miss out on holiday sales. "We want the finished product to be of the finest quality," said Louis Feola, President of Universal Home Video. "As often happens with an animated feature, more time was needed to complete the film."

While the finishing touches are being made on the film, a *Hercules and Xena* road tour is now trekking around the U.S., featuring a traveling exhibit of paraphernalia from the live-action show, previews of the interactive games and an inside look at the production of the animated feature.

The King and I

The first feature-length animated adaptation of the Broadway musical, *The King and I,* is now in production through Morgan Creek Entertainment. The film is being directed by Rick Rich, of Rich Entertainment, producers of films like *The Swan Princess*.

In addition to the above mentioned titles, video stores are packed with plenty of perennial holiday releases of old favorites, like Rankin-Bass' stop-motion classic *Rudolph's Shiny New Year*, distributed by Warner Bros., *Disney's Mickey's Christmas Carol* and *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Be sure to read *The Animation Flash,* Animation World Network's Weekly Email Newsletter, to learn about future video releases throughout the year.

Wendy Jackson is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine.

Distribution	Available	Price	RunTime	Rating	Tie - Ins
Babes in Toyland					
MGM Home Entertainment	10/25/97	$19.98	80 min	G	-MGM Interactive -Mail-in offer for plush toy -Nathan's Restaurants
Pippi Longstocking					
Warner Bros. Home Video	11/25/97	$19.96	75 min.	G	-Figurineincluded with video -Coupons included for other Warner titles -Continental Airlines
The Land Before Time					
Universal Studios Home Video	12/9/97	$24.98	74 min.	G	-Denny's Restaurants -Dairy Queen Restaurants -Sound Source Interactive -Kitchen Sink Press -Equity Toys -Float in Hollywood Christmas Parade
Beauty and the Beast					
Walt Disney Home Video	11/11/97	$26.99	70 min	G	-Mattel Toys -Disney Online -Walt Disney Records -Disneyworld, Disneyland -Ocean Spray
Annabelle's Wish					
Hallmark Home Entertainment	10/21/97	$12.95	54 min	not rated	-Mrs. Fields Cookies -Golden Bookss -Novus Credit Cards -Previews at 144 Shopping mall Santa Claus -Elementary school activity sheets -Make-A-Wish Foundation -Float in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade -RisingTide/Blue Eye Records -Point of purchase promotional plush toy
Scooby Doo Goes to Hollywood					
Warner Bros. Home Video	10/21/97	$14.95	51 min.	G	-Comic Book included with video
Pinky and the Brain: Mice of the Jungle					
Warner Bros. Home Video	11/4/97	$12.95	23min.	n/a	-Wendy's Restaurants -Kids WB! Network -Warner Bros. Online
Brand Spanking New Doug's Secret Christmas					
Buena Vista Home Video	10/7/97	$12.99	44 min	G	-Nestle Fodds -International Paper -Mattel Toys
Fern Gully II					
Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment	3/1/98	TBD	TBD	TBO	-Mail in offerfor plush toy
Hercules and Xena					
Universal Studios Home Video	1/6/98	$19.98	90 min.	not rated	-Sound Source Inteactive -Universal live-action television series -Road tour -Universal Consumer Products -Tropicana Jucies -Topps Comics -Carl's Jr. Restaurants -Hercules & Xenafan conventions
The King and I					
Warner Bros. Home Video	Summer 1999	TBD	TBD	TBO	-Playmates Toys

Video Parlors Take Root in Kenya

by Justus Olielo

Access to electronic media, especially television and video, has been considered one of the biggest drawbacks in development communication in Kenya, especially in the rural areas where 79% of the population lives. Only 15% of Kenya's households have access to television and over 80% of these live in urban centers (30% in the capitol city of Nairobi). Videos are even more inaccessible to the average household. In 1995 for example, it was estimated that only about 80,000 video tape recorders were in circulation in the entire country.

With statistics like these, it is hardly surprising that electronic media has been considered the least effective tool in the mass dissemination of information. It excludes the majority of people who need the information the most. However, the potential of video as an entertainment and information source is only beginning to be appreciated. New commercial approaches to the use of video as a means for mass communication are being explored by private companies. One company which has made considerable progress in this area, is Regional Reach Ltd.

UNICEF's Sara series is shown to children in Kenya's rural market centers through video outlets. © UNICEF.

A Network of Sorts

Only 15% of Kenya's households have access to television...

Regional Reach is a private company with a unique and innovative advertising concept. The company targets rural people, who do not have access to television, with advertisement messages. Regional Reach records popular educational and entertainment programs on video and screens them on outdoor monitors in Kenya's rural market centers. The monitors and video playback units are mounted on heavy metal casings and screwed to the outside walls of shops, restaurants and other convenient public places. The programs are predominately aired in the afternoons from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. on weekdays, and from 3:00 to 9:00 p.m. on week-ends. The outside location ensures uninhibited audience viewing of the shows. The videos are normally three to four hours in duration and contain a variety of shows with topics ranging from farming, HIV/AIDS awareness, family planning, education, self help, wildlife and popular television soap operas. The advertisements are slotted in between the shows. The business owner, on whose wall the equipment is mounted, looks after it free of cost. They are quite happy to do so since they benefit from the increased crowds. To date, the company has about 320 outlets across the country with a viewership currently estimated at 400,000 per month. Regional Reach obtains its revenue from the companies whose products are advertised through the outlets. Educational materials such as UNICEF's animated Sara Communication Initiative have been shown using these outlets as well.

Regional Reach records popular educational and entertainment programs on video and screens them on outdoor monitors in Kenya's rural market centers.

One Television at a Time

A lot of "one-off" video outlets have also mushroomed around small markets, urban centers and in slum areas of the country's major towns. Most of these video parlors cater to the entertainment needs of the residents who do not have access to, or cannot afford the fees charged by, the cinema houses. Normally, the most popular shows are action-type feature films (*Rambo*, *Commando*, *Ninja*, etc), which are readily available from video libraries. With special arrangements, video parlors will also occasionally show educational materials. For example, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* has been shown extensively in secondary schools, as it is a required

text for Kenya's national Literature in English examinations. Non-government organizations working on health and related programs, will also often pay to use the services of such video parlors to show tapes on HIV/AIDS for example. This often means carrying the television monitor and video playback unit, along with mobile power generators, to a specific site, as in many cases, the locations do not have electricity.

A lot of "one-off" video outlets have also mushroomed around small markets, urban centers and in slum areas of the country's major towns.

The charge for watching entertainment shows range from an affordable 5 to 20 Kenya shillings per show (U.S. $1.00 = Ksh 65). The audience is mostly composed of youths, with the majority being young men and boys. Sponsored video shows either have specific audiences, like students, or play to the general public. In these cases the shows are usually followed by discussions and other activities built around the subject. More and more people are recognizing the important role of video tapes and video parlors as an agent for behavior development especially for young people. It is envisioned that this role will become even more apparent in the next few years.

Justus Olielo is the Assistant Communication Officer at the UNICEF- Eastern and Southern African Regional Office, located in Nairobi, Kenya.

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Growth Looms in the Made-For-Video Animation Market

by George Johnston

When animation historians look back on significant trends of the 1990s, they may conclude that the decade's most important contribution was in made-for-video animation. And, as is so often the case, the success of made-for-video animation took many in the industry by surprise.

The Land Before Time V. © Universal Studios Home Video.

Way back in 1994, following the artistic and financial success of Walt Disney's *Aladdin*, the company tried an experiment. Using its television animation wing, a feature-length sequel to the theatrical original was released, but not in theaters. Instead, *The Return of Jafar* went directly to video and it is estimated that more than 10 million units of the tape were sold at a suggested retail price of $22.99.

"Here was a product stream that we really didn't go after with an elaborate and detailed marketing campaign, and the results were simply fantastic."

While research showed VCR penetration in the United States at about 90 million, the results astounded even Disney. It didn't take a magic genie to figure out that the company had discovered a new gold mine. "It sort of turned the company on its ear," says Laurel Whitcomb, Vice President of Publicity at Walt Disney Television Animation. "Here was a product stream that we really didn't go after with an elaborate and detailed marketing campaign, and the results were simply fantastic." Since *Jafar*, Disney's other made-for-video animated releases have been a second *Aladdin* sequel, *Aladdin and the King of Thieves* (1996), and *Pooh's Grand Adventure: The Search for Christopher Robin* (1997).

The Majors' New Market

Among the major U.S. animation studios, Disney is not alone in recognizing the potential of made-for-video animation. According to Universal Home Video president Louis Feola, "We recognized the opportunity for feature-length direct-to-video animated movies back in late 1991. Early in the process, we recognized that the marketplace would be open to quality, direct-to-video feature-length animated product. *The Land Before Time*, which was a very successful feature-length movie, became the obvious option

FernGully II: The Magical Rescue is being produced by Wild Brain and will be released by Warner Bros. in spring 1998. © FAI Films/Rosen Harper Entertainment.

to move forward on. We have since released *Land Before Time II, III* and *IV* to enormous reception." According to Feola, the four titles in the *Land Before Time* franchise have had collective sales of more than 20 million units. More will be sold as well, when *The Land Before Time V* is released on December 9.

WildStorm's Gen13 ©WildStorm.

The Hollywood Reporter's home video editor, Scott Hettrick, who has been observing the made-for-video animation trend, says, "If the amount of resources, energy and effort being put into made-for-video projects by studios is any indication, the market will be considerable in a short period of time." He noted that Universal has a *Hercules and Xena* feature, based on the popular live-action shows, set for direct-to-video release in January. Meanwhile, MGM Animation released its *Babes in Toyland* directly to video on October 14. Hettrick also says that Warner Bros. is producing a feature-length made-for-video version of its *Batman* series using 3-D animation effects. But wait! There's even more. A sequel to 20th Century Fox's *FernGully: The Last Rainforest* will go directly to video in the Spring of 1998, and Hallmark Entertainment is set for a December release date of *Annabelle's Wish.* Disney, of course, has the most titles in the works. Theatrical features *Beauty and the Beast, Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Lion King* all have made-for-video sequels in various stages of readiness.*

Independents Taking A Chance

Just as the response to made-for-video animated product took the animation industry by surprise, a variation on the trend, the *original* animated video or OAV, could also have a similar affect on the future of animation. According to anime expert Fred Patten of Streamline Entertainment, OAVs started accidentally in Japan in the early 1980s when an "animation company tried to get backing for a TV series based on an idea they came up with, but could not. Since they had the presentation already made up, they talked to one of the video companies about subsidizing it as an original video and it caught on." Patten says that now in Japan as many as 30 OAVs per month are released. Some Japanese OAV titles have been released, and many serialized, in the United States. They include *Crying Freeman, Doomed Megalopolis, Giant Robo* and *The Guyver.*

Putting an American spin on the OAV phenomenon are some smaller animation companies that are trying to be Davids to the Goliaths of animation. Two of those companies are actually comic book publishers: San Diego-based WildStorm Productions and San Antonio, Texas-based Antarctic Press. Another company, taking a different tack, is San Francisco's Wild Brain Inc.

For the last two years, WildStorm's Santa Monica, California animation studio has been working on an animated version of its top-selling title, *Gen13.* According to WildStorm president John Nee, *Gen13* is essentially about a group of superpowered teenagers. "Their parents were part of a government experiment to create superpowered soldiers," he says of Jim Lee, Brandon Choi and J. Scott Campbell's joint creation. WildStorm's experiment with OAV differs from the efforts of majors Disney and Universal in that there have been no theatrical antecedents to boost public awareness. Still, if the success in both live-action and animation of another comic-based title, *Spawn,* is any gauge, *Gen13* could show that a made-for video animated project doesn't require a successful theatrical predecessor. However, the Hollywood Reporter's Hettrick notes, "Even with recognizable brands and characters, marketing and publicity expenditures on an original title are enormous." Another distinction is that, unlike most of the properties from the major studios, *Gen13*

is not aimed at young children. Plans are to release *Gen13* in both G and PG-13 versions.

Finally, there is the issue of creative control. Unlike WildStorm's earlier foray into animation with *WildC.A.T.S.*, which was on a television network for Saturday morning consumption, *Gen13* will have no worries about a network's broadcast standards and practices department, nor of FCC educational content concerns. OAVs have taken off in Japan for similar reasons. "Since this is direct sales to the public, they don't have to worry about television censorship or anything like that," notes Patten.

WildStorm, Wild Brain and Antarctic all believe they are on to something big and new with original made-for-video animation.

Antarctic Press' Ben Dunn echoes the sentiment. As the publisher and creator of soon-to-be animated *Warrior Nun Areala,* which is best described as "a superhero nun who fights evil," Dunn says, "Creative control is very important. You get to do whatever you feel your vision is. If it works or fails based on what I feel, I'm willing to take that chance. But at least I can say it was something I had a 100 percent hand in."

There is yet another difference in approach by these smaller companies. Unlike a bigger operation, where marketing and demographic studies are presumably needed before greenlighting a project, the decision to go forward on the *Gen13* made-for-video was made strictly by the seat-of-the-pants. "There were no studies done. You just go to the comic book stores and video stores and see what people buy," says director Kevin Altieri, whose distinctions include directing 28 episodes of Warner Bros.' *Batman: The Animated Series*. Joe Dunn, Vice President of Antarctic Press and younger brother of Ben, has a similar viewpoint. "First and foremost, we think it would be neat. That's how we do most of our creative endeavors."

A Very Lucrative Market

While Wild Brain didn't have that luxury with its contracted *FernGully* sequel, *FernGully II: The Magical Rescue,* its CEO and co-founder Jeff Fino likes the made-for-video approach for its financial potential. While Fino describes the plot as "baby animals are taken from the forest by bad men, and our old pals from the forest come to their rescue," he does say, "The thing about *FernGully* that made it an attractive property to us was that we could make it inexpensively by animating it overseas, but ensuring high quality. The end result was that we were able to produce a high-quality film for not a lot of money." The budget for the feature-length *FernGully* is in the $4 million range. The feature-length, *Gen13's* budget is roughly the same, while *Warrior Nun's* budget for a 30-minute length first installment comes in at roughly $250,000.

Continues Fino, "Our clients may have been dealing with diminished expectations, but I think everyone was pleasantly surprised with what we were able to accomplish. So, I think the direct-to-video market is kind of encouraging from that perspective. You really have to do a lot of creative things to make the film work on a shoestring budget."

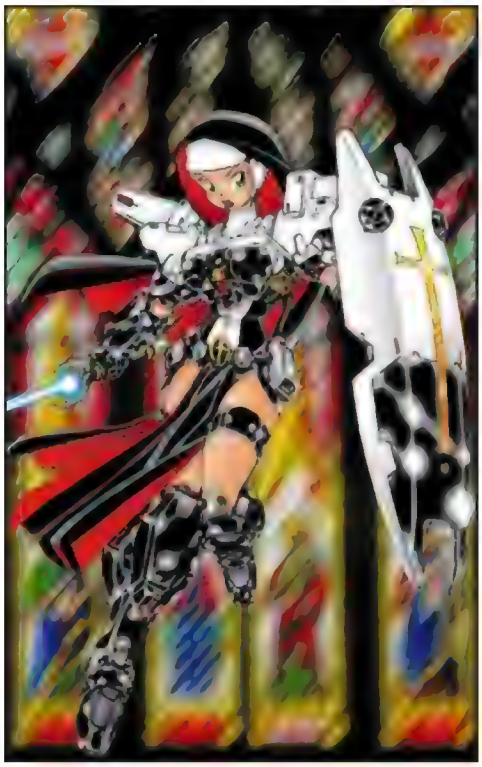
Addressing the cost-to-return ratio, Fino adds, "I think the financial aspects of direct-to-video are the most appealing. If you think about it, say a direct-to-video movie costs $4 million. For something like *FernGully,* it is not unreasonable to project unit sales of four million cassettes. Now if you multiply that by, say, $15 per cassette, that's $60 million. Of course you have production, distribution, advertising costs, etc. Those costs are not as high as theatrical releases, so you don't have the kind of major expenses. I think, if you add even the distribution percentages that studios tend to add, you're still going to have a very healthy profit."

As for *Gen13's* potential sales, Nee says: "It's hard to peg ... because nothing like this has ever been done." Altieri, on the other hand, is more enthusiastic, saying, "I think it's gonna make a mountain of cash." With regard to the *Warrior Nun* OAV, Ben Dunn says, "My feeling is that there is really no possible way we can lose money. When you have the product, it's in your hands, and it's there forever. So as long as you have it, you can just keep on selling it until you finally do make money. It may take a long time, but I'm willing to take that risk."

Meanwhile, the major animation studios will do everything within their considerable powers not only to keep the made-for-video market going but to dominate it.

Opening the Floodgates

WildStorm, Wild Brain and Antarctic all believe they are on to something big and new with original made-for-video animation. Beyond the potential for profit, Dunn feels that there is a bigger picture to the trend. "What I'm trying to do basically is open doors. I'm trying to show that a small company like ours is capable of doing animation that is comparable to any-



Antarctic Press' Warrior Nun. ©Antarctic Press.

thing that is currently on TV or on video right now. It remains to be seen whether anything like this is going to be successful. If this project makes money, people are going to take notice. If we can show that it is possible to do a reasonably budgeted animated feature direct-to-video and make some money off of it, it's going to open a lot of doors to the people who want to get in on it as well."

Post *FernGully II,* Fino indicates that Wild Brain may try the OAV approach with original characters as well. "There is nothing to stop us. *FernGully* proved a lot of things to us and one of them was that we could handle this kind of production, and that we like it. Also that there is a huge market for this kind of product."

Meanwhile, the major animation studios will do everything within their considerable powers not only to keep the made-for-video market going but to dominate it. Walt Disney Television Animation Vice President for Specials and Direct to Video, Sharon Morrill says that lessons learned post *The Return of Jafar* and *The King of Thieves* puts the priority on quicker turnaround times for sequels to the theatrical releases and raising the bar for quality to approach the level maintained by Disney's feature division. "We've been playing catch-up, but in the next two to three years we will be releasing these (made-for-video sequels) in a timely manner," she says. "Also, another strategy that came about was to increase the quality of our direct-to-videos. It is very important to us that people perceive the direct-to-video as not a second-rate movie, but indeed, a first-rate movie and probably the best that they will see on video.

"We have all-digital ink-and-paint systems in our wholly owned studios now. We also have computer graphic imagery in our upcoming movie *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas* [which is slated for a Nov. 11 release]. There is incredible CGI work in there. So, the quality of the animation has increased significantly." On the talent side, Morrill points to the use of known stars such as Demi Moore, Tim Curry and Bernadette Peters to voice the characters. Musically, Disney will utilize Academy Award and Grammy Award-winning composers and lyricists.

"I think '98 is going to be a breakout year for this market."
- Jeff Fino, Wild Brain Inc.

But Disney is also keeping a watchful eye on the OAV front. Months ago, when it bought the rights to make a live-action version of WildStorm's *Gen13,* it was canny enough to also buy the domestic distribution rights to the aforementioned animated version.

Hopefully for the animation industry and animation fans alike, made-for-video programs will continue to grow. However, despite the optimism of the animation companies, the final word rests with the consumers. Could a glut of product mean buyers with limited budgets will keep their purchases to just a couple videocassettes per year? Or, is the potential market bigger than just the families upon which majors like Disney, Universal and Warner Bros. have concentrated? And, if these pioneer American-style OAVs catch on, will every storyboard artist with a "killer idea" launch a flood of mediocre product that will eventually kill the goose that lays the golden videocassette? Fino, for one, remains hopeful. With Antarctic's, WildStorm's and Wild Brain's projects all hitting retailers next year, he notes, "I think '98 is going to be a breakout year for this market. Certainly the big studios are into it, but I think there is room for a grassroots effort if smaller studios have aspirations to that end."

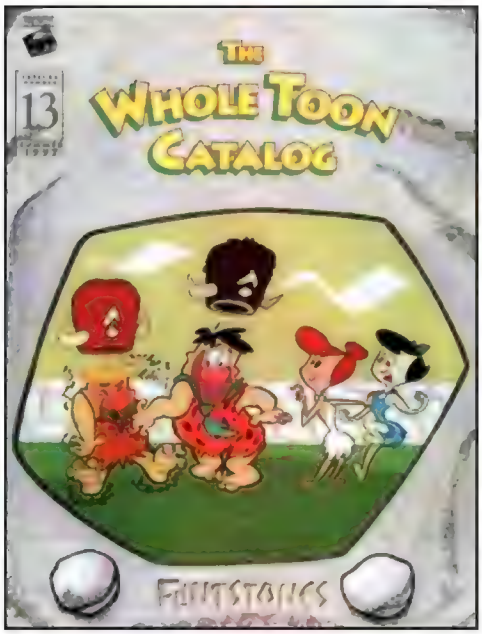
*It should also be noted that Disney and Pixar have a sequel to the computer-generated hit *Toy Story* that will go straight to video, but it is not being produced through Disney's TV animation division.

George Johnston is the electronic editor at The Hollywood Reporter *and is a member of the Writers Guild of America's Animation Writers Caucus.*

The World's BIGGEST Animation Home Video Market ?

by Fred Patten

The home video market for animation in America has basically grown out of nowhere during the last ten years. It started largely with cheaply produced videos of minor television cartoons and old, public-domain theatrical shorts. Today, virtually all of the best animated features ever made in America are available on video, with



The Whole Toon Catalog sells hundreds of anime titles imported from Japan for U.S. audiences. Cover image © Hanna-Barbera. Visit the Whole Toon web site in AWN!

an increasing number of high-quality features being produced especially for video release by Disney and other top studios.

However, the Japanese animation video market is rumored to eclipse America's. The latest issue (Summer 1996) of *The Whole Toon Catalog*, which purports to include every commercial animation video currently in print in America, includes 51 pages of mostly American animation, mixed with a few American releases of British, Italian, Hungarian, and other international animations. This is followed by a separate 33 page section of "Japanimation," American editions of Japanese animation videos. These are just the Japanese titles which have been bought for American release! How large is the complete animation video market in Japan?

How large is the complete animation video market in Japan? It is big!

A Look into *Anime V*

It is big! Japan, with a population of approximately 126 million to the U.S.' 266 million, has almost three times as many video stores. Video sales and rentals are dominated by live-action titles, but the animation market is big enough that there are specialty magazines dedicated to animation video buyers alone. The oldest and most informative of these is *Anime V* (for Animation Video), which has been published since 1985 and currently averages 140 pages per month. Much of this is advertising, but there is a very informative log of animation video releases each month, divided into five categories.

According to *Anime V*'s two most recent logs, for July and August 1997, there were 13 releases in July and 8 in August, of animation titles produced for direct-to-video sales for general audiences. There were three releases in July and three in August, in a catch-all category combining videos of Japanese animated theatrical films, television special movies, and Japanese releases of foreign animation. This latter category included Pixar's *Tiny Toy Stories* in August. There were 22 releases in July and 26 in August of videos of Japanese half-hour television cartoon episodes. Adult direct-to-video animation accounted for five releases in July, and ten in August. ("Adult" means explicit pornography, includ-

Anime V, the monthly Japanese magazine devoted to the home video market.

ing the notorious "tentacle rape" horror fantasies. Japanese social customs allow mildly erotic humor, including brief nude shower scenes, in television cartoons and general-audience videos designed for adolescents. This is why so many of the "anime" videos currently appearing in America for the teen super-hero/science-fiction market carry a warning label, "Contains violence and nudity. Parental guidance suggested."). The final category, another catch-all for animated music videos, videos of live concerts by voice actresses singing animation theme songs, and "the making of" specials on the production of major animated features, included two releases in July and two more in August.

A young woman is engulfed by a tentacled monster in Lady Blue. © Central Park Media.

Japan, with a population of approximately 126 million to the U.S.' 266 million, has almost three times as many video stores.

Anime V publishes an annual catalog each February of all the new direct-to-video animation releases of the past year. This year's catalog for the 1996 releases lists 233 videos. These include only 122 different titles; many were popular series running to a half-dozen or more video volumes. The catalog also keys these to a variety of subject categories, including "science fiction" (outer space adventure), "mecha" (giant robots), "action" (sports, detective dramas), "military drama," "fantasy," "rebellious youth" (teen gangs), "TV adaptations" (sequels to popular television cartoons), "literary adaptations" (animation based upon either classic novels or comic books), "games" (dramatizations of video games), "adult" and more.

Distribution Channels

A scan of the distributors' labels is similarly informative. Bandai Visual covers the broadest range, including approximately equal numbers of animated direct-to-video titles, movies, and television series. King Records, Pioneer LDC, VAP, and Star Child also distribute across this range, but in smaller quantities. Toei Video, a branch of Toei Animation, the largest animation studio in Japan, distributes a similar mixture. Virtually all of its videos, whether direct-to-video titles, movies, or television cartoons, are of in-house animation; in comparison to other distributors' videos which are produced by a large number of animation studios. Pink Pineapple concentrates on the distribution of adult animation, both produced by its own studio or by one or two similar specialty animation houses. K.S.S. specializes in direct-to-video animation, both for its own distribution and for other distributors.

Robot Trooper Votoms, a title in the "mecha" genre of Japanese animation. © Central Park Media.

But relying upon *Anime V* alone would result in a highly distorted picture of the Japanese animation video market. The magazine is slanted for the direct-to-video market, which is geared toward action-adventure usually involving science-fictional or super-hero dramatics which would require prohibitive special-effects budgets in live-action. Many of these are produced for a niche market and have comparatively small sales.

As elsewhere, the primary audiences for animation videos in Japan are the family-oriented viewers.

Disney! Disney! Disney!

A visit to a major Japanese video store presents quite a different picture. Disney! Disney! Disney! Disney is barely mentioned in *Anime V*, but every video store catering to the general public features flats and display stands in eye-catching positions for Disney videos. Disney claimed in a 1996 press release that it controls 65% of the Japanese market for childrens' videotapes. This presumably includes Disney's live-action videos as well.

Disney has also just begun its distribution of the feature films of Hayao Miyazaki, Japan's most beloved and highest-grossing theatrical animation director. Disney obtained the worldwide video rights to Miyazaki's features produced by Studio Ghibli (i.e., his movies of the past dozen years) in a highly publicized acquisition in July 1996. Miyazaki's animated movies have heretofore been

available on video only at rental prices (usually ¥16,000/$140). The new Disney distribution makes Miyazaki available in the ¥3,000/$25 sell-through price range for the first time.

As elsewhere, the primary audiences for animation videos in Japan are the family-oriented viewers. MGM's *Tom and Jerry* cartoons are moving briskly in a current video marketing campaign. Warner Bros. also has its own video distribution for Japanese releases of its American titles, which includes much of its animation backlist. The Japanese spend their yen on these and the domestic animation titles which are similarly family- and child-oriented. The television cartoons *Sailor Moon* and *Dragon Ball* (both Toei Animation titles), were picked up for American and other international television outlets a couple of years ago because of their tremendous popularity in Japan, both on television and in video sales.

One of Japan's popular "military drama" titles, Angel Cop. © Manga Entertainment.

The Japanese public does not share the American preconception that "animation is just for kids,"

Inside a Video Store

Video stores in Japan have "anime" sections as well, but they are much larger since they include many titles which have not been sold to international markets. The average video store bases its orders on the expected popularity of each title, but there is usually a standard minimum order for 100 units of every animation title. Unless a title is unusually popular, it is not re-ordered. There are enough new animation releases each month to keep the shelves filled. Therefore most general video stores have a constant turnover and only the newest animation videos can be found. Shoppers who want older titles or a wider range of selections can find animation specialty video shops in most cities. These are similar to comic-book shops in America, catering to the older teens and "young salarymen" who are the market for the action/adventure direct-to-video titles. In addition to the videos, animation fans can find all of the associated merchandise such as animation magazines, reference books, posters, animation-character telephone cards, action figures and toys, and usually a bin of cheap original production cels from the latest releases.

Sell-through prices for the mass-marketed family titles, such as Disney's, are in the ¥3,000/$25 range. A major television cartoon series may offer four half-hour episodes (about 100 minutes) for ¥7,000/$60 on its initial release, while the series is still topping the television popularity charts. Video re-releases a few years later drop to the ¥3,000 level. New direct-to-video releases (known as OAV titles, for "original animation video"), usually in the half-hour to 45-minute range, cost ¥5,000/$45 to ¥6,000/$55. Up to now, Japanese video releases of major theatrical animated features such as *Akira, Ghost in the Shell* or Miyazaki's movies have been limited to rental prices in the ¥10,000/$85 to ¥16,000/$140 range. It will be interesting to see how Disney's marketing of Miyazaki's features will affect the entire range of theatrical animated feature videos.

For the public which prefers to rent rather than own, overnight rentals of videos (live and animation) are comparable to American prices; ¥200/$1.75 to ¥300/$2.50. ¥500/$4.25 is standard for a two-night rental of a popular new title.

The animation video market in Japan is large because the Japanese video market in general is huge. In addition, the Japanese public does not share the American preconception that "animation is just for kids," so there is no loss of face for teens or adults to buy or rent cartoon videos for themselves. The American video market is just experimenting with animation for any section besides children. As the popularity of Japanese animation videos for teen and adult viewers increases in America, and is joined by video releases of theatrical features like *Heavy Metal* and *Beavis & Butt-head Do America,* direct-to-video titles like *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm*, and video releases of the more mature television productions such as *Spawn, Spicy City, Aeon Flux* and *The Simpsons*, the American animation home-video market should expand in size and respectability until it can support original production just as the theatrical and television markets do.

Fred Patten has written on anime for fan and professional magazines since the late 1970s. He currently writes a regular anime column for Animation Magazine.

An Interview with Christie's Animation Art Consultant Pierre Lambert

by Deborah Reber

Animator, writer, collector and artist, Pierre Lambert has a true love and respect for animation, and is considered one of the most important animation experts in the world. He is responsible for assessing artwork and valuing pieces for animation auctions at Christie's in New York, London and Los Angeles. I recently had dinner with Pierre at Lespinasse, an elegant French restaurant located in New York City's St. Regis Hotel, while Pierre was visiting from his native France. Over rich, delicious food (Pierre knows the chef well, and we were treated to a flurry of courses), we talked about the market for the animation auctions on which he consults. Our conversation went a little something like this...

All the most valuable pieces of animation art are beautiful.

Pierre Lambert: I know the main collectors of animation art very well. Many are friends. I visit all the big collections in America, in France, in Germany. I know what artwork exists. It's very important to know what exists to give a true estimation for an animation auction. Because if you find a piece, and it is the only one that exists in the world, of course, it will be very expensive. If there are tons and tons and tons, the value will be much lower. My job is to give estimations, and to give information about the artwork - if it is true artwork, the background, the care of the artwork, if it was restored, if it's a key set-up, an exact image of the movie, an exact frame...

Deborah Reber: Who makes up the animation market? Who are the people buying the art at the auctions?

PL: The market began at Christie's. The first auction was an auction of only Disney animation. It was the collection of a publicity artist who worked at the Disney studios in the early 1940s. This man understood that animation art would be very valuable in the future as "art," and asked Disney if he could take some artwork from the studios. He had the most important collection in the world - art from *Pinocchio, Snow White,* and Mickey Mouse films. He sold part of his collection in 1984, and it marked the beginning of the market. Some of the Mickey Mouse and Pinocchio artwork went for $20,000 in 1984.

Pierre Lambert.

Before then there were some galleries that had a few drawings, and only a few collectors in America, but the market began mainly with this first sale.

DR: Did that auction set a precedent for future animation auctions?

PL: Well, the market began very strong because the collection was so exceptional. At first, the other auctions weren't so good because they didn't find many wonderful pieces. But year after year, Christie's

and Sotheby's sold nice artwork, but piece-by-piece. But the market grew. Today the world record for a piece of animation art is U.S. $260,000, for a black and white Mickey Mouse, an early Mickey, and U.S. $220,000 for a very nice *Snow White* key set-up of the final sequence.

Deborah Reber and Pierre Lambert enjoying dinner at Lespinasse in NewYork, October 1997. Photo © Deborah Reber 1997.

DR: That's the overall record or the Christie's record?

PL: Overall. (pauses) So you have two markets. You have the crazy collectors who have a lot of money, who can spend a lot of money, like Steven Spielberg. At the end of the 1980's, there were a few collectors who could spend thousands and thousands of dollars. And then you have the regular market, which begins at one or two thousand dollars, and goes to $20,000 dollars. In this range, you have between 500 and 4,000 collectors.

Sometimes I see artwork that I hate, but I say it is $2,000 because the market is the market.

DR: Internationally?

PL: Yes, but a lot are American collectors, though there are very important collectors today in Europe, in Japan. For each auction, seventy percent of the art is leaving America. Of the ten best pieces, six or seven go out of America. The people who are looking to buy very expensive animation artwork like art itself, you know, impressionist paintings, and so on. There are some great artists who worked for Disney - great background artists, great animators. Today, some artwork is sixty years old. It is part of American history.

DR: Could you describe to me an "average" collector?

PL: It's very simple. The collector is a child who never grew up. They remember their first movie. If you are very old it is *Snow White*, if you are very young it is *The Lion King*, and in between the two best movies, you have twenty-five other movies. So for some people it is *Fantasia*, for others it is *Pinocchio*, *Bambi* ... it depends on when you were born. Some of the collectors are looking only to collect Mickey Mouse. One of the most important collectors in the world collects only *Snow White*. He has a few other things, *Pinocchio* drawings, because they're very nice, but he is the top *Snow White* collector in the world. Another collector collects only Mickey Mouse. Then you have some collectors who are looking only for Warner Bros. or for Tex Avery, MGM. But the very strong market is for Disney artwork.

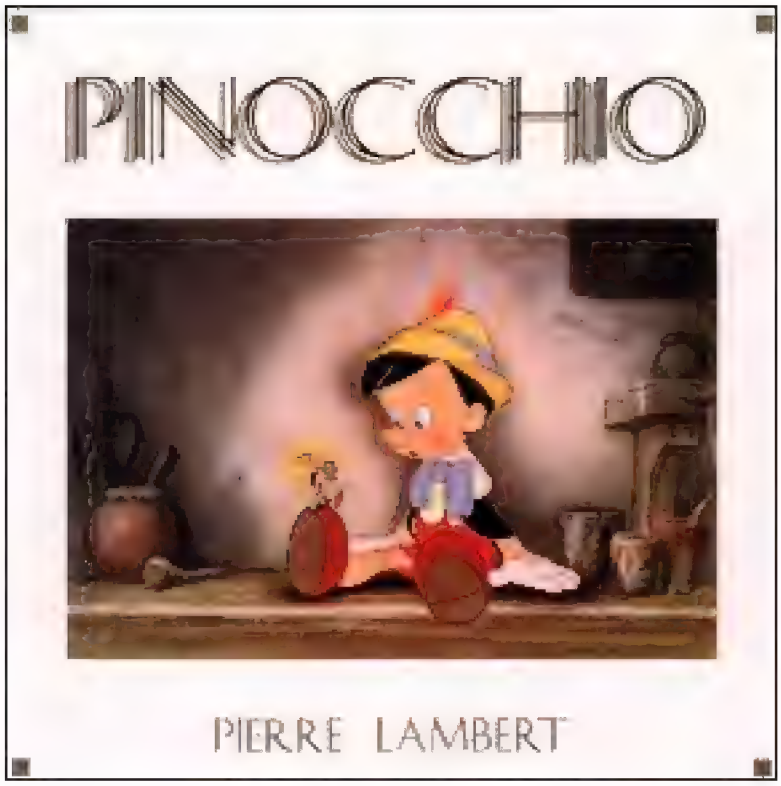
Our waiter interrupts the conversation at this point, presenting us with a delectable entree (I didn't ask questions...I just ate). After a few bites, Pierre continues his train of thought...

PL: I forgot to tell you that before the auctions, they had art galleries at Disney World and Disneyland in the 1950s. They sold the production cels from the movies - *Sleeping Beauty, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,* etc. They were very cheap, U.S. $5.00 to buy a production cel. They sold thousands and thousands and thousands ... hundreds of thousands of cels. Many people in America had the cels in their children's rooms and they came back to the animation art gallery at the park and they bought many more cels. That was the beginning of the market before the auctions, because you can't create a market if the first piece is $1,000. Many of the collectors didn't have money when they were 20 years old. They didn't have money at 30 years old. But they have a lot of money at 40 years old. I think that the main reason for the success of this market is that at the beginning, it was easy to buy animation cels.

DR: Where does the original artwork come from for each auction?

PL: Much of the artwork comes in from people who worked for

Disney. Someone in their family will find an old cel in the corner of the house, in the cellar, because their father, their grandfather, worked for Disney. For the most part it's the people who worked for Disney, who took the artwork from the studio, like a souvenir. Disney also sold artwork at the end of the 1930s. They sold to a few galleries, including Couvoisier Gallery [the official Disney gallery], but most of the artwork comes from people who worked for Disney.



The anticipated English edition of Pierre Lambert's book Pinnochio, will be released by Hyperion Publishing on December 11.

DR: So, for every animation auction, Christie's hopes to get enough people coming to them with cels that they've found...

PL: Oh yes, of course. Every time it is difficult, because it is two months before the auction and you don't know if you have enough art. And the best pieces are coming from people who find one piece. You know, I have a story. I don't know what the connection was with Disney, if his brother worked for Disney or what, but an 84-year-old man found black & white set-ups of Mickey Mouse. I think that the total he made [from the auction] was U.S. 1 million dollars. It changed the end of his life, you know.

DR: That would change anyone's life!

PL: (laughs) Definitely...

DR: How do you go about placing a value on a piece of artwork?

PL: It depends on the piece. The main thing is if it's vintage or not. A key *Snow White* piece to give an example... You take a set-up of *Snow White,* if it's a key set-up and an exact frame of the movie - of course, the best set-up is Snow White with the Seven Dwarfs, since very few exist - is very expensive. One was sold at Sotheby's for $220,000 dollars. It was Snow White, the Prince, all the animals, and all the dwarfs. It was an original background. It was hanging in a hospital, and the hospital sold it to Sotheby's for $200,000 dollars. The character in the cel is very important. The quality of the background, and the quality of the set-up is very important too, because it's art. If it is beautiful it will, of course, be more valuable. All the most valuable pieces of animation art are beautiful. They need to be key. They need to be absolutely exact. They need to be in perfect condition.

DR: If you have a cel that is all of those optimal things, in perfect condition, with the original background and all the right characters, then how do you go about determining the value?

PL: Well, the value depends on how many pieces exist in the world, and what is the interest of all the collectors. I'm very good in this situation because I know the collectors, and I know what they are looking for. I know that this one's looking for Snow White and so on. Elyse [Luray-Marx, Christie's Animation Art Specialist] knows the collectors very well too. Together, we know if the piece will be of interest to these people, only one collector, maybe two, or more and at which level. Again, I like doing that because the game is to find the true price. I give a very true estimation. I know the market very well but sometimes I need to check if the piece is key in the movie. It is very important to be serious because it's a very serious market.

I think the best way to collect today is to collect animation drawings, because it's less expensive and it's more beautiful.

DR: You were saying how you value a piece of artwork, that you know which collectors are after what pieces. Is it that small of a group of people?

PL: I said that for the big pieces, but for the regular market, we have the

other auctions to go by. We know that a *Sleeping Beauty* animation cel will sell for U.S. $2,000 or $3,000. If one is better it will be $3,500 to $4,000. If it's less, it will be $2,000 or $1,000. The thing in question is the quality of the art, and you need to be logical. You need to be mature. Sometimes I see artwork that I hate, but I say it is $2,000 dollars because the market is the market. I am like a technician. But the pleasure is to have a wonderful piece from *Pinocchio,* or from *Snow White.* The biggest pleasure, when I am working for Christie's, is to put the best piece of artwork on the wall and to work with it in the background because I know I can never have the piece.

The collector is a child who never grew up.

DR: At least you get to admire it for a few days.

PL: For a few days, yes.

DR: If a cel doesn't have an original background, how much will that decrease the value?

PL: Without the original production background, it could go for between U.S. $1,000 and $20,000. Maybe a black & white Mickey cel alone could be $40,000. It is the maximum. But the cel itself, I would not say it is artistic. Everybody can brush [paint]. To ink is difficult, but to brush [paint] is very easy. They sell something at The Disney Store, "Paint a Cel," and it has small paints, a brush and cels with just the ink on celluloid. You can paint your own cel of Little Mermaid or Winnie the Pooh so, it's not difficult to paint a cel.

DR: It's really the background that makes the animation worth something...

PL: Yes, the backgrounds and the drawings. The drawings are not very expensive. The drawings are between U.S. $500 and $5,000. At $5,000 you have the best animation drawing from *Pinocchio,* from *Snow White,* from Mickey Mouse. I think the best way to collect today is to collect animation drawings, because it's less expensive and it's more beautiful. Of course, that's my opinion. I like backgrounds and drawings and conceptual artworks.

DR: Of those people who buy the artwork, how often are they planning to re-sell it, and if they do re-sell it, do they expect to make a profit?

PL: There are very few collectors who are looking to make an investment and sell it five years later. All of the main collectors like animation and they don't have the idea to sell the artwork later. If they will sell the artwork later it is to buy better artwork, because they find something better for their collection. Then sometimes they will sell the piece again. For example, a rich collector of Chip and Dale cels began to collect at Christie's and he bought everything. Today he decides to sell everything to Sotheby's and he sold everything very well. He didn't make money, but he got his money back, and he bought new artwork. Of course, you have galleries that are looking to make profits, but that's maybe twenty percent of the market. Eighty percent is made up of people who like animation. For an auction, maybe ten to fifteen percent will be artwork that you've seen before. Ten to fifteen percent, not more. It is not a lot, and never the biggest pieces; all the masterpieces, all the most beautiful set-ups, backgrounds, never come back.

DR: Never?

PL: Never. Probably because they are so expensive and the people that bought the piece have so much money that they will never need to sell it. I know where the pieces are but they will never come back.

DR: In your book, what would be the most valuable cel?

PL: A black and white key set-up of Mickey, an early cel from 1931, 1932. And of course, this cel with the background is very, very rare. A black and white Mickey set-up is up over U.S. $100,000 every time. Every time.

Editor's Note: In an upcoming issue of AWM *we will review Pierre Lambert's impressive book* Pinocchio. *Previously released in French, the book is now being released in an English language form. This museum-quality book of text with rarely seen images, collected from the Disney Animation Research Library, the Disney Archives and private sources, is a detailed study of the classic Disney film.*

Deborah Reber has been an Animation Development Consultant with UNICEF for the past three years, and currently oversees the Cartoons for Children's Rights campaign, as well as other animation advocacy activities.

Collecting Animation Art: 101

by Steven Grossfeld

Collecting animation art is one of the most exciting hobbies there is. Imagine displaying a piece of your childhood framed on your wall! Just about everyone can relate to cartoons. We all grew up with animation, and I don't know of anyone who wouldn't like to own a framed Mickey Mouse or Bugs Bunny. In the following pages, I hope to give some insight into the world of animation art enthusiasts and what they collect. I'll begin by offering a brief overview of the types of animation art that collectors look for and where they go to build their collections.

One should expect no less than a money-back guarantee of authenticity and satisfaction from the seller.

The Grand Production Cel

The most popular form of animation art is the "production cel," in other words, a hand-painted animation cel that was actually filmed to create one frame of an animated scene that appeared in a cartoon. The overwhelming popularity of the production cel is most likely because collectors best identify with the final painted version of the character. Production cels can range from

A production cel and background from Chuck Jones' 1996 LooneyTunes short, Pullet Surprise. © 1996 Warner Bros.

thousands of dollars each (for rare, early Disney cels) to only a couple of dollars each (for commercial cels and some Anime cels). Value is determined by a number of factors, including rarity, condition of the cel, pose of the character and in which cartoon the cel appeared.

Production cels are sold in theme parks, studio stores, galleries, major auction houses and a growing number of mail order catalog companies and online electronic catalogs. A novice collector, as well as the seasoned veteran, should examine artwork thoroughly before purchasing. One should expect no less than a money-back guarantee of authenticity and satisfaction from the seller. Auctions usually do not offer this, and I recommend only purchasing at auction when you are expert enough to determine value and authenticity on your own. Purchasing by credit card is always a good idea, as well. If there is any question of fraud, you can refuse to pay and your credit card company will back you, providing you can prove your claim.

Limited Edition Cels Aren't So Limited!

Limited edition cels are available through a growing number of galleries, theme parks and catalog sellers. Prices may vary as much as 30% to 50%, depending on where you shop. A limited edition cel is a hand-painted cel that was created for sale or as a premium of some sort. These cels can have hand-inked lines, Xerox "ink lines" or serigraphed "ink lines." The process used to get the outline of the characters on the cel before painting is up to the creator of the artwork. It

Termite Terrace, a limited edition cel featuring Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies working in an animation studio. © 1997 Warner Bros.

That Means I Love You, a sericel recreated by original Hanna-Barbera designer Jerry Eisenberg, from a 1962 episode of The Jetsons, "A Date With Jet Screamer." © 1996 Hanna-Barbera Cartoons, Inc. A Turner Company.

is more costly to have a cel hand-inked, and therefore, these usually retail for more than Xerox or serigraph lined cels. With the number of animation art collectors rapidly growing, the studios are quick to increase the number of limited edition cels released each year. Prices for Limited Editions vary greatly. You can find a Hanna-Barbera limited edition cel selling for under $350 framed, and you can also find a Disney limited edition cel selling for $2,300 framed. Collecting limited edition cels is popular, and many collectors remain faithful to basically one studio in preference.

Purchasing by credit card is always a good idea.

With the advent of computer animation and the absence of production cels from many of the new Disney features, the studio has found a new niche. There are no true production cels available from such films as *Aladdin, Pocahontas, Beauty and the Beast, Lion King and Hunchback of Notre Dame* because the films' cels or frames were all digitally inked and painted. Collectors' appetites were satisfied with special "auctions" put on by Disney in conjunction with Sotheby's. Special one-of-a-kind "limited edition cels" were created, taken directly from final animation drawings of the characters. These limited edition cels were then placed on their corresponding backgrounds, which were actually the production backgrounds used in the film, and offered up for sale. The auction results were astonishing; many of the final bid results reached triple the estimates offered in the catalogs. Such pieces were released only through these auctions and later were available on the secondary market, meaning that the original buyers were now attempting to resell the artwork, either on their own or through galleries. To further satisfy the Disney animation collectors, the studio released a number of limited edition cels as well as sericels.

Sericels: Are They Serious?

Sericels are silk-screened prints on clear plastic, or acetate, which appear to look just like a painted cel. These prints are made pretty much using the same process as silk-screened T-shirts. While T-shirts sell for about $20, sericels sell from $60 to a top price of $500 for a large, framed print of many characters. Sericels have very little value on the secondary market, and quite honestly many collectors are very upset when they find out how little of their original purchase price they can get if they are forced to sell one. I'm only mentioning this because of the hundreds of complaints that I see each month from collectors who feel cheated by those selling sericels at such incredible prices. If the manufacturing cost of a sericel is $3 to $5 at most, what should they sell for? You be the judge. Sericels can be purchased at studio stores, theme parks, many animation art galleries, frame shops, discount wholesale club stores, as well as through mail order and Internet catalogues and on television shopping channels.

Go, Speed Racer, Go! a fine art lithograph signed by Ippei Kuri, the director and animator of the original series. Speed Racer is ™ and © Speed Racer Enterprises, Inc. You can buy this piece of art in the Animation World Store!

There are no true production cels available from such films as Aladdin, Pocahontas, Beauty and the Beast, Lion King and Hunchback of Notre Dame.

Lithographs, A Newcomer

There are also a growing number of lithographs with animation themes that have become quite popular in recent years. Signed, limited edition lithographs have always been popular, but now they are very popular with animation art collectors. A lithograph is a fine art print resulting from a print process requiring a series of raised plates to place each of the colors on the paper. Plates are made from a variety of substances, including stone, metal and plastic. Such notable artists as Peter Max, Charles Fazzino and Melanie Taylor Kent have done releases licensed by the studios. In addition, Warner Bros. has released a number of

limited edition lithos created in house by animation artists. These lithographs have sold well and are generally very popular with Warner Bros. animation fans. Lithographs are available through studio stores, theme parks, fine art galleries and animation galleries.

The Art Behind the Final Cel

Animation layouts and production backgrounds are also popular with savvy collectors. While not as popular as cel art, these production pieces are rare and difficult to obtain. The rare find of an original layout from a 1930's Disney cartoon could fetch several thousand dollars in the marketplace. A layout is generally a scene that shows both character and scenery. Although there are background layouts as well as character layouts, the combination of both on the final layout is preferred by many. These can be found at a small number of galleries devoted to specializing in vintage (i.e. pre-1964 at Warner Bros. and pre-1975 at Disney) original animation art.

Storyboards are the visual script of a cartoon, and my favorite form of animation art. I highly recommend at least one storyboard in every animation art collector's portfolio. Storyboards are so diverse in size, materials and coloration that pinning a specific definition on them is difficult. There are storyboard sheets featuring as many as nine "thumbnail" drawings, along with accompanying text under each frame. There are also storyboards that are one scene drawn on a sheet of paper or board. Each studio has their own special style of storyboard art and each is just as entertaining. These can be found at galleries specializing in original animation art, animation auctions, and on occasion, studio stores in very limited quantities.

Fans also revel in collecting animation drawings. This is a pretty loose category that encompasses animator's rough drawings, which are sketchy in style, animation clean-up drawings, which are the final clean lined drawings used to make the cels, key and inbetween animation drawings, which can fall into either one of the previous categories. These drawings are most often more affordable to beginning collectors with limited incomes, and are preferred by collectors who currently work in the business. These can be found at galleries specializing in original animation art as well as at auctions.

A rare original production drawing by Frank Thomas, from Disney's Pinnochio. From a private European collection, courtesy of Pierre Lambert. © Disney.

I highly recommend at least one storyboard in every animation art collector's portfolio.

Other Collectibles

There are many other forms of animation art which are collected today. For example, there are maquette models, used by animators to aid in keeping perspective when drawing the characters. These are found generally at auctions. There are also inspirational paintings and drawings used to help set the mood of scenes early in the production process, which are found at auctions and several specialty animation galleries. In addition, there are movie posters, lobby cards and publicity stills, which were printed to help publicize the cartoons when they appeared. These can usually be found at a small number of galleries and memorabilia shows.

Animation art as a collectible has come quite a long way since the 1984 Basmajian auction was held at Christie's East in New York. That was a milestone that placed this art form in the public eye, and we owe quite a bit to Christie's and Sotheby's for supporting our frenzy. As a collector, I must also thank Disney, Warner Bros., MGM and the rest for creating animation and not destroying all of the art after the cartoons were filmed. Special thanks goes to Courviossier Galleries and later to the Rudman's of Gallery Lainzberg, who had the foresight to sell animation art to the public.

Steven Grossfeld has been collecting animation art for 22 years. He is President of C.A. Animation (www.thegremlin.com), founder and moderator of CELMAIL *(www.thegremlin.com/CELMAILhome.html), the weekly e-mail newsletter of animation art fans, and is a long-time member of ASIFA International. His articles have been published in* In Toon! Magazine, The Inside Collector, Storyboard - The Art of Laughter, *and in* CELMAIL. *Some of Steven's interviews have aired on CNN, Fox News and News 12 - Long Island (New York). He resides in Great Neck, New York with his wife Debbi, and is the father of four children.*

inside CHRISTIE'S

An Interview With Elyse Luray-Marx

by Heather Kenyon

Elyse Luray-Marx is the animation art specialist and Animation Auction Supervisor at the world renowned Christie's. While consultant Pierre Lambert helps authenticate and determine the value of specific pieces and increase the European market and awareness, Elyse is in charge of gathering materials and performing the necessary business deals for the auction house. She is also responsible for appraising pieces of art work and with building Christie's clientele and helping to educate the public about animation art.

Phone bidders at work at an animation art auction at Christie's East. Elyse Luray-Marx, holding paddle 8, is Christie's Animation Art specialist. © Christie's.

I spoke with Elyse while she was in the midst of preparing the next Christie's auction: the special offering of Chuck Jones' personal animation art collection. Just in time for the holidays and to honor his 85th birthday, the auction will take place on December 18, 1997 at 10:00 in New York City. I was pleasantly surprised when I spoke to Elyse. Rather than a lofty, high-art attitude one might expect from such a renowned New York auction house, Elyse has a forthcoming, enthusiastic and friendly demeanor.

Heather Kenyon: How do you invite people to come to auctions?

Elyse Luray-Marx: All [of] our auctions are open to the public. We go "on view," meaning that you can actually view the pieces, five days prior to each auction. So, we will be open to the public for five days and that usually is over one weekend. We are open late on Monday nights for people to come in. We advertise in all the trade magazines relating to animation, as well as on our site on the Internet. Locally in The New York Times, and in The Los Angeles Times if the sale is in Los Angeles. Basically, we have two sales a year. They're always every December in New York and every June. The June auctions will now be taking place in Los Angeles.

HK: How do you prepare the pieces for an auction? Do you get the pieces in all different types of condition?

ELM: Well, basically we're an auction house, so we're not a gallery. We sell everything "as-is." We don't necessarily do anything to the pieces, except to offer the service of having the piece professionally matted for a fee. If you bring a piece in and it is not framed, we do have professional portfolios that we place the pieces in for the viewing [prior to the auction]. In the gallery during the viewing, all the framed pieces go up on the walls and all the un-framed pieces are placed in portfolios on a table with gloves for people to go through and look at them.

HK: If you get cels that are very old, and maybe the paint is coming off, how is that treated? I know for instance that there are people who just specialize in fixing that, do you hire them prior?

ELM: Well, I don't advise either way because 50 percent of my clients don't want to touch [the pieces] and 50 percent of my clients don't care if it's touched. If they do want it to be fixed, there are two people I highly recommend, the two best people in the country: one is in Arizona and one is in Virginia. Ron Barbagallo, he's by far, across the board, he's the best. Then there's Judy Stillway who does really, really nice work.

HK: Can you describe the process? For instance, "I just found a 1930's Disney piece." What do I do?

ELM: There are a couple of different ways. I get a tremendous amount of phone calls, and most of those people will describe the piece on the telephone and if I think it's worth the time, I will tell them to send a photograph of the piece in. Eighty-five percent of the appraisals we do are usually by photograph. Once we receive the photograph, we send the person a letter. In the letter, we give them an auction estimate as well as outline our sale of terms, how you go about bringing a piece into Christie's. If you're in the area, you can make an appointment for a free appraisal. You're more than welcome to come to Christie's and make an appointment. I'll come down to see you and talk to you about your pieces. Lastly, if you have a very large collection, it pays for me to fly to wherever you are. We will travel to see collections depending on what the dollar value of that collection is.

Key set-up from How the Grinch Stole Christmas (1966), signed by Chuck Jones. Estimate: $3,000-$5,000. ©Warner Bros.

HK: People think that Christie's is somehow very exclusive. "I can't talk to anyone there or I don't know how to even go about it." But it's really as simple as calling you?

ELM: Absolutely, I'm more than happy to help anybody. One of our jobs is to educate the public. Whether that's educating them on what their property is worth, finding something they're interested in or just learning about animation art, that's what the phones are there for. We're always on the floor during the whole viewing times to answer any questions for clients to learn. That's really an important thing for us. Education is something we feel really strongly about. In fact, [we will] probably have an educational course in Los Angeles. We had one scheduled, [but] unfortunately, for reasons beyond our control, [it] had to be canceled.

HK: It will be open to anyone? To teach them about animation art?

ELM: Yes. Basically, the most important thing to know is we're really out there to help people in anyway that we possibly can. Whether it's teaching them about animation or appraising their artwork or helping them build their collections, we really try to be accessible to people and help them in anyway possible. That's really the most important thing.

HK: It's great to hear you say that, because I think a lot of people believe Christie's is only for extremely rich people, but that isn't the feel of the atmosphere.

Eighty-five percent of the appraisals we do are usually by photograph.

ELM: And that's not the case, truly not the case, which is why I think we have had such a strong following for animation for so many years.

HK: Let's say, you have these pieces of artwork collected, waiting for the next sale, and there's a fire. Do people assign the pieces to you and then you sell them for a percentage of what they [are auctioned] for? Christie's never owns the pieces?

ELM: No, we don't. We're strictly a consignment-based auction house. In reference to the fire, everything is insured for the mean of the estimate before it goes up for auction. Knock on wood, that never happens.

HK: I know, didn't mean to make you think about it.

ELM: No, everything is insured. Unless you want to sign an insurance waiver. One percent of the selling price is the charge you pay for insurance. Our commission is based on a sliding scale and depending on how much the piece is worth is the percentage that we take.

HK: Why do people come to Christie's to sell their pieces? What's the advantage?

ELM: Well, we're an international auction house, which is the first big advantage. We were the first auction house to actually hold international animation auctions starting in 1985. We represent the fair market value of the pieces and we have the ability to really give great customer service to our clients. We work hard to get the highest prices, which is why we have a lot of the records for pieces that are sold at auctions.

HK: It seems to me that the pieces

would be perceived as being more valuable if they're sold at Christie's verses if they're sold through other channels.

ELM: I would like to think that.

HK: How do you get people to bring their special pieces to you? Are you actively seeking people out or do you wait for people to come to you?

Basically, the most important thing to know is we're really out there to help people in anyway that we possibly can.

ELM: A little of both. Certainly there are clients that we cultivate because we know they have really nice collections but a lot of it is word of mouth. People saying, "I met this person, why don't you call them?" Advertising during appraisal days lets people know that we are happy to help them.

HK: Do you ever cater to special, individual buyers?

ELM: Once in a while we'll do a private sale, but those private sales are pieces that are over $100,000.

HK: How do you know if you have enough art to hold an auction?

ELM: It's a dollar value. We don't hold auctions below half a million dollars. We usually have about 200 lots per auction.

HK: What is a "lot?"

ELM: Each piece is called a lot. We used to have 400 lots, but what we have done is we've raised the minimum per lot. We used to be able to sell a lot at $500, but now if you bring in one piece the minimum is $1500. Our auctions are smaller, but our selling dollars are either the same, if not higher, because we are really concentrating on selling the higher-end animation.

HK: Now, you also have a Christie's in London.

ELM: We do and we've sold animation there once a year. It tends to be lower-end value pieces. They're very different than the sales in New York.

HK: If I'm in London and I have a piece, it would almost be better to contact you in New York, to sell it in one of those auctions?

ELM: Well, the market is stronger right now in the United States, but my minimum is $1,500 and South Kensington's is a little bit less than that. They have the opportunity to sell lower-end items where I really don't. But that doesn't necessarily mean it would sell better at one place than the other. We are an international auction house, so our buyers are going to go regardless [of] where the property is.

HK: How many people attend the average auction?

ELM: I would say there's about a hundred people that come and there's usually about twenty phone lines going at the same time.

HK: Oh, wow. I thought you had to be there.

ELM: If you can't come to the auction physically, you can be on the telephone where we will repeat all the action that's going on in the room. If that's not convenient for you, you can leave bids and we will execute them for you and try to get [the artwork] as low as possible. Or you can fax in bids and we can execute your faxed bids. So it is possible for us to do it for you even if you're not around.

HK: One would just fax in, "Lot 17. I'll bid up to $15,000," and you would take care of that for them?

ELM: That's correct.

HK: How many people work an average auction?

ELM: I would say twenty to twenty five people, depending on the amount of phone interest.

HK: And are they all full-time employees of Christie's?

ELM: Yes.

HK: The people on the phone lines, where are they? Are they predominately in Europe?

ELM: Yes, but I would say it depends... If we are selling on the East Coast, then there are a lot [of people] from the West Coast [calling], and if we're on the West Coast selling a lot of [people] from the East [are calling]. However, 40 percent of our sales are going to Europe and Asia.

Another problem is that computers have replaced cels so there are not a lot [of new cels].

HK: Could you walk us through the entire event? Like the day in the life of an auction?

ELM: Sure. First of all, six months prior to an auction, I'm going out and looking at the material and trying to cultivate and put together a

sale. Then we come into the auction house and we get together all the property three months prior to the auction. We catalogue it. We shoot it here in New York, in our digital professional photo studio. Then we lay out the catalogue, and we send it to our printers in London. A month before the auction, the catalogue comes out and goes to our subscription list, editorial and also a press release will go out trying to generate any press that we can get. For instance, with Chuck Jones' 85th birthday we're selling his personal collection in December, and we were able to generate a lot of press because we [distributed the information] very early. Then for the next month, prior to the auction, after the catalogues are out, I'm trying to sell the sell. I'm calling clients, telling them what I think would be good for their collection, what I don't think would be good for their collection, what's rare, giving them advice, [and] doing condition reports if [they] can't come to see the pieces and want to know what condition a piece is in. I'll help with that.

HK: You're hands-on, talking to the main buyers that you know so that they will show up and they will purchase?

ELM: Absolutely. The day of the auction, you can come to the viewing, you can look at all the properties, or you can pre-register so the day of the auction there's paddles already waiting for you when you come in. Then the auction starts and you bid on what you want, then you pay and then you pick up your property.

HK: What time of day are they?

ELM: This one will be at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Key set-up from Another Froggy Evening (1995), signed by Chuck Jones. Estimate: $1,500-$2,000. ©Warner Bros.

HK: How long do they last?

ELM: We do a hundred lots per hour.

HK: Wow, that's quick! What sort of people attend and what do they wear? (laughs) This is what we're really interested in...

I think eventually drawings and backgrounds will become that much more desirable because that's all there will be to collect...

ELM: Everything. People come in suits. People come in jeans. You have lawyers. You have doctors and you have Wall Street-types. But you also have artists and other animators, actors. It's emotional. The characters are emotional and they reflect a response in you that is either reminiscent of something in the past or makes you smile or you makes you laugh or cry. It really affects a lot of different types of people.

HK: Are they a very different crowd than, for instance, one that comes to the other auctions that Christie's holds, or do you get that mix for everything?

ELM: I would say we get that mix for everything. The nice thing about animation is there's really, truly some artistic worth to it. Some of the best artists of the century worked at the Disney Studios or Warner Bros. Studios so we are recognizing that animation is an art form. There is a sophistication to this type of collectible, so you do have clients out there that understand art for art's sake, verses different types of collectibles that we sell here. In our department, movie memorabilia doesn't really have any aesthetic value, where animation truly does.

HK: What is included in the collectibles department?

ELM: In the collectibles department here at Christie's? We sell animation art, comic art, entertainment, rock and roll, sport memorabilia, vintage posters including Hollywood movie posters, western memorabilia, toys, dolls and teddy bears.

HK: What is the atmosphere like inside the auction?

ELM: It's a lot of fun. People have been coming here since 1985, so a lot of the dealers, clients, have become personal friends of Christie's. I think they feel really comfortable here, and we have a lot of fun at the auctions. There's always a lot of laughs.

HK: It's such a small market for the very high-priced pieces of artwork, you really know each and every one of these people, so you can cater to them on what they need, don't you?

ELM: We hope to. We certainly hope to. It is small but it's been growing tremendously over the last five years, so that's been really nice.

HK: Do you have people contact you, "Just letting you know, I'm really interested in x-kind of artwork"?

ELM: We have something at Christie's called, "Lot Finder" that you can subscribe to and it's very inexpensive. If you're interested in Donald Duck, anywhere in the world that Christie's sells something with Donald Duck on it, they'll send you a letter notifying you that it's coming up for auction.

HK: Who would you call for that?

ELM: Her name is Dell Feldman and she's in charge of customer service here at Christie's.

HK: Then you also mentioned that you can register to receive a catalogue?

ELM: Well, there's subscriptions. You can sign up for a subscription and again, for a small fee, we will send you all the catalogues. This year we're actually doing something new, which is we're selling animation in the morning and comic art and collectibles in the afternoon. It should be interesting to see if there's any crossover between the two.

I'm selling contemporary Chuck Jones' pieces in this [upcoming] auction that are from 1994 and 1995, but these are the last cels that Warner Bros. used.

HK: Does it seem like there's a trend of these rare pieces drying up?

ELM: It is drying up. They are much, much harder to find then they were ten years ago, extremely hard actually. Another problem is that computers have replaced cels so there are not a lot [of new cels]. I think eventually drawings and backgrounds will become that much more desirable because that's all there will be to collect, which is why we sold a storyboard drawing for $101,500. I think people are starting to realize, "Hey, these pieces are just as important as key set-ups." I'm selling contemporary Chuck Jones' pieces in this [upcoming] auction that are from 1994 and 1995, but these are the last cels that Warner Bros. used. Historically, they are really important. You can say they're key set-ups and they're contemporary but that's it, they're the last ones. You won't be able to get them anymore.

HK: It is interesting that you're selling pieces from 1994 and 1995 and that they still have such value, even though they are so new.

ELM: It's not often that I do. [But] because I'm selling the personal collection of Chuck Jones, it's the exception to the rule and again, they are [the] key set-ups that were used for the films and are hand painted. I'm not selling contemporary limited editions where the cels are produced just for re-sale purposes only. The re-sale prices of those cels have been almost fifty percent [less] on the dollar at auction.

HK: You don't sell any limited editions?

ELM: No, I do not. Never will. I don't think we ever will. We only sell original artwork.

For information about Christie's auctions or catalogues, call 1-800-395-6300 (U.S. and Canada) or visit http://www.christies.com.

Heather Kenyon is Editor-in-Chief of Animation World Magazine.

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AWN Launches the Animation World Store

The Internet has long been lauded as a tool of great potential for the distribution of not only ideas and knowledge but also merchandise. Last month Animation World Network (AWN), publishers of *Animation World Magazine*, launched the first Internet commerce venture devoted entirely to distributing animation merchandise. The Animation World Store's virtual doors opened with a special selection of both exclusive and limited edition animation art. "There is tremendous potential for the Internet as a means for distribution. AWN plans to explore that fully, through relationships with artists, distributors, galleries and dealers worldwide," said Ron Diamond, Founder and President of Animation World Network. Whether one is trying to find a very select piece of animation art or doesn't have a local animation art gallery, The Animation World Store will prove to be a viable marketplace for all walks of animation collector.

"There is tremendous potential for the Internet as a means for distribution." - Ron Diamond

Let's face it. On an average trip to an animation art gallery, one usually cannot find cels from international films or award-winning shorts. Because the market for such cels is limited, most gallery owners cannot afford to dedicate the wall space to a piece that few people have seen in action. AWN however, has a rare advantage. As a focal point for animation enthusiasts with over 25,000 Internet users monthly visiting the site from 122 countries, AWN is a perfect host to cater to the very specific needs of such a core clientele.

Richard Condie's *The Big Snit*

In this spirit, AWN is presenting a worldwide exclusive: the first public offering of original, hand-painted and signed production cels from *The Big Snit,* Richard Condie's Academy Award-nominated animated film which has achieved cult status in international animation circles. Produced at the National Film Board of Canada, *The Big Snit* is an offbeat, irreverent short depicting the human condition and the subject of nuclear war with outrageous humor. This original production artwork, which will also be selectively showcased in a UNICEF-sponsored animation art auction in December, is expected to sell quickly. The film's director Richard Condie, who is selecting and hand-signing each cel in the collection, said, " I look forward to my association with Animation World Network and hope that collectors who enjoyed the film will enjoy [owning] an original piece of it."

On the other hand there are a lot of people who would love to buy what is hanging on a gallery's walls but they don't have a gallery near them. As a result, AWN will be offering limited edition animation artwork from The Tooniversal Company's popular series, which includes *Superman*, *Speed Racer* and *Astroboy*. Igor Meglic, President of Tooniversal, said, "I'm really happy that we'll be able to reach the general public through our association with AWN and the Animation Store. Using the Internet, everyone interested in animation art can view and purchase art with a few strokes of the computer keyboard. We at Tooniversal felt it was necessary to reach out to the many buyers who were not lucky enough to have an animation art gallery close by. Now with the Animation Store on AWN, everyone has their own private gallery!"

The Big Snit © 1997

"Now with the Animation Store on AWN, everyone has their own private gallery!" - Igor Meglic

Tooniversal's Limited Edition Collection

Tooniversal is offering an extensive collection through AWN:

• Four different Limited Edition hand-painted cel images featuring

the character *Superman* as he appears in the 1940-1942 Fleischer Studios cartoons. Three of the images are signed by animator Myron Waldman, who worked on the original Superman series at Fleischer Studios.

Challenge of the Masked Racer © 1997 Speed Racer Enterprises

• Six different Limited Edition hand-painted cel images and one lithograph from the cult classic animated series *Speed Racer*. All pieces in this collection are signed by the series' key animator and director, Ippei Kuri, and one is signed by the original character voice actors, Peter Fernandez and Corinne Orr. Speed Racer is currently experiencing a revival due to the 30th anniversary of the show on American television.

• Four different Limited Edition hand-painted cel images from The Ub Iwerks Collection, based on animated short films Iwerks produced at his own studio in the early 1930s. Cels in this collection were signed by the late Irv Spence, an animation industry veteran who worked at the Ub Iwerks Studio and later went on to become a key animator of the Tom and Jerry cartoons at MGM.

• A Limited Edition hand-painted cel image from the Fleischer Studios' 1940 short film, *Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy.* Each of the 100 cels from this image are signed by Myron Waldman, who was head animator for the film.

Superman Saves Lois © 1997 DC Comics

• A Limited Edition hand-painted cel image from Osamu Tezuka's 1960 Japanese animated television series, *Astroboy*. Each of the 300 cels from this image are signed by Ms. Billie Lou Watt, the original English voice of the futuristic child superhero, Astroboy.

• A Limited Edition hand-painted cel image featuring the characters from *Star Blazers,* the animated series from Voyager Entertainment. This series is signed by one of the creators of Star Blazers, Yoshinobu Nishizaki, in Japanese lettering.

• Limited Edition hand-painted cels featuring *Pojo the Weredrake,* a new animated character developed by Ken O'Connor, and featured in several Tooniversal projects. This is the only limited edition cel that Ken, whose career in animation spanned over six decades as an art director and layout artist at Disney, has ever agreed to sign.

AWN is actively looking for ideas and suggestions on what types of merchandise to offer in the store.

Future Animation World Store offerings will include video collections of short animated films by independent animators, as well as other videos, books, artwork, equipment and animation-related merchandise. Currently, AWN hosts the web site for animator Bill Plympton, who has raised substantial amounts of funding for his independent films by selling artwork, videos and copies of his books through his site on Animation World Network.

AWN is actively looking for ideas and suggestions on what types of merchandise to offer in the store. As the hub of animation on the Internet, AWN can only grow through the interactive exchange of ideas and information. Conjure up your wildest ideas and drop AWN a line at sales@awn.com.

One can view the store at http://www.awn.com/awnstore/index.html. Take a look and let us know what you think.

SO You Want to Open An' Animation Art Gallery!

by Tim Stocoak

Editor's Note: This is an unabridged editorial submitted by Tim Stocoak. We invite people to submit such editorials to us for publication and to respond.

Ah, a rewarding career in the world of retail animation art! I only got involved in this lucrative business after Cal Arts returned my portfolio with a footprint (!) on the cover one year, and lost my portfolio entirely another year (both true stories). With my hopes of being the next Bob Clampett effectively squashed (yet not stretched), I did what I perceived to be the next best thing. If I couldn't *create* cartoons for an eager public, then the logical substitute would be to *sell* them to an even more eager public. I began working in that bastard child of the animation industry - the animation *art* industry: I got a job in a cartoon gallery. Five years of experience in this field taught me some valuable lessons.

I'm no longer in this wonderful business, but I'm here to pass on some of the most important ideas I have learned to anyone else thinking of embarking on a rewarding career in the field of selling cels...

1.) The real animation industry and the animation art gallery industry are actually related...sort of.

The animation art gallery is sort of like the poor relation to the animation production industry. Think of animation production as, oh, I dunno, Mufasa from *The Lion King.* The gallery world is therefore Scar - the weak, unsuccessful, and slightly evil scavenging brother who picks through the stronger sibling's refuse merely to stay alive. What a wonderful career! A professional vulture!

The animation art gallery is sort of like the poor relation to the animation production industry.

2.) All animation art is garbage, but *valuable* garbage!

Stand in any gallery long enough and soon you'll hear someone - employee or bemused, know-it-all customer - utter the phrase, "They used to throw these things out!" with regards to the cels, now framed and bearing high price tags, on the walls. Gallery employees, therefore, are making their living selling the studios' garbage! While a lot of this stuff, which *was* considered garbage 50 years ago, is now truly valuable and important to preserve, it's rather ironic that what the studios and other licensees are generating today, specifically to be sold as "collectibles," is, in fact, trash. It is trash today, and it will be trash 50 years from now. But who's going to care 50 years from now? You'll be happily retired or maybe even dead.

3.) If you don't have *production* art to sell, draw up a *new* cel, label it "limited edition" and watch the public snatch it up faster than the original art.

The vague term "limited edition" has, of late, been carefully ingrained into the public's consciousness as, "something, anything, worth collecting." Studios can paint up 250 to 750 identical cels that were never used in any production, have some old animator sign them, slap some over-important seal on the front, and then peddle them off as quick as they please. How many times can old animation celebrities sign their name before it actually devalues the *previous* cels they've signed? One particularly beloved and aggressively marketed veteran animator has personally signed his name well over *sixty thousand* times on limited edition cels alone! Can his signature really be that valuable any more? Aah,

just sell the stuff and try not to worry about it. Customers can sense fear.

How many times can old animation celebrities sign their name before it actually devalues the *previous* cels they've signed?

4.) Don't limit yourself to selling just production cels and limited edition cels.

Many galleries now feature other fine, limited edition collectibles for the ignorant public to buy. Some such products include pewter sculptures looking like little more than garishly painted PVC figures glued to a piece of marble; ragged papier-mâché bas-relief-type wall sculptures of all of your favorite characters in glorious white; and poster-size images of entire studios' casts of characters, all meticulously cut out and glued to different levels of foam core in a half-baked effort to give the illusion of three dimensions. Perhaps to let others interpret their characters in their individual styles, the studios apparently give the artists - none of whom are particularly famous or talented nor have anything *remotely* to do with the animation world - absolutely no reference materials from which to work. If you and your customers like characters realized completely off-model in various dimensions for which they were never suited, then any of these wonderful products are for you. As an added bonus, each of these collectibles have been hand-signed by whichever dubious talent created it. Marvelous!

5.) Don't worry that cels are being slowly phased out in the production end of animation - that's just more acetate for you!

All that extra acetate can be put to good use making sericels of scenes from cartoons that didn't even use cels! Sericels, basically cels with images grafted onto them via the serigraph process, are usually released in edition sizes of about 1,000 to 10,0000. There's no shortage of these babies... but then, there's no shortage of stupid collectors to buy them! And don't fret that "computer animation" will put you out of business. Scenes from the computer generated Coca-Cola Polar Bear series of commercials have been transferred onto sericels and sold as "original animation art!" People love this stuff despite its inherent worthlessness. You *can't* lose!

6.) Animation art dealers are the salt of the earth, especially the ones on the East Coast.

By opening an animation art gallery, you'll be joining the ranks of a revered and unique brotherhood known for its intelligence, honesty and integrity. Most dealers are everyday people, no different than you or I, with a fervent love of cartoons that just couldn't be quenched by simply, writing books about cartoons or just maybe watching cartoons. No, these honorable people had to share their love of the animated image by making this whimsical artwork available to those who otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to buy a picture of Frankenberry, mis-identified as a character from *The Groovy Goolies,* for six hundred dollars, all sales final. For this we thank them. Soon, *your* customers will be thanking *you!*

7.) When selling animation art, the key word is "investment."

As a dealer, your job is to separate customers from their hard-earned money in exchange for a picture of Mickey Mouse or Fat Albert or a Smurf. The easiest way to do this is to appeal to their financial sense by explaining that a picture of Magilla Gorilla will better suit their needs of putting their kids through college twelve years from now than would long-term CDs or blue chip stocks. Fortunately, since today's public is more stupid than ever, and since magazines, newspapers, and the ten o'clock news routinely feature cutesy human interest stories about how animation memorabilia is the hot, "new" collectible, your job is easy.

Squirm, you leech, squirm!

8.) Despite #7, animation art never *really* goes up in value.

That is, when you are buying it. Once your retail animation art business has been established for a while, you'll get the opportunity to buy from everyday schmoes as opposed to buying all your art from the studios' impersonal "wholesale animation art" departments and other dealers. Folks will call or come in with artwork to sell, with the preconceived notion that whatever they have is really quite valuable. An important rule to remember is that the actual value of any piece of animation art brought in by a non-dealer is inversely proportional to what they think it's worth. That guy coming in with a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* cel with the $3.99 Toys-R-Us sticker still on it will

want thousands of dollars for it, while the hapless fellow with the *Snow White* cel on the master background won't part with it for less than four hundred clams.

Regardless, it is your job - née, your responsibility - as a dealer to give that person as little money as possible for that piece of artwork. Remember, they wouldn't be selling it unless they really needed the money, or, in many cases, if it wasn't stolen, so they'll probably take whatever you offer them. So while their face may sink when you offer them a mere fraction of its true market value, be strong. To offer a fair price would be to turn your back on the community of dealers who have worked so hard at bilking countless others - including numerous, ancient retired animators who saved their own work for decades - out of priceless artwork for pennies on the dollar. So, disregard what the latest auction results reflect; disregard how long a particular limited edition has been sold out; disregard how rare a character is; and disregard that the person offering you a cel originally bought it from your company five years ago only because you advised him that the artwork was sure to go up in value. As a good animation art dealer, you will learn how to make the seller feel like you are doing him a favor by taking his valuable cel off his hands for a fraction of its worth. And, most importantly, when buying artwork, paying for it with a wad of twenties goes a long way towards making the seller think he's getting more than he really is.

9.) If you have a gallery, be sure to be ready with an answer for any question that may pop up.

Nothing scares off customers quicker than ignorance on the part of gallery employees. And, as anyone who has visited most animation galleries, private, or those within so-called "Studio Stores" knows, most gallery employees are *as* ignorant, if not more so, than the clueless customers who wander in. Does that stop them from making a sale? No sir! The trick is to use intimidation, or to change the subject to confuse the potential customer into either buying something that they don't want or at least just shutting up and letting you alone, leaving you, the gallery dealer or employee, free to go back to playing solitaire on the computer. Following are some suggested responses which work well for any number of questions you may receive.

• "Um, because, like, they are like, highly collectible and are like, a good investment, you know?"

• "Ohhhh yes, he's one of my favorite...animation...guys...too."

• "No, not currently, but if you write your name and phone number on this card, if we ever get anything in with uh...that character, we'll call you."

• "Ohhhh yes...It's fun artwork, isn't it?"

God bless Bugs Bunny and Taz and millions of stupid consumers worldwide.

These stock responses work well with all but about 2% of the people who will come into your gallery. Occasionally, people who actually work in the production end of the animation industry will visit your place of business. This is unfortunate, yet unavoidable. Usually, they appear in pairs, and talk quietly among themselves, occasionally chuckling at the high prices of cels from projects they worked on, or at the gross inaccuracies on the descriptive labels of various framed pieces. The bolder of these people will bring to your attention the mistakes on said labels, while others will merely ask you technical questions, the answers to which, as a dealer of animation art, you should know, but will not. Any conversation initiated by industry professionals is done solely so that they may watch you squirm. This is their right as they would not have you forget that as an animation art dealer, you are merely a parasite feeding off of the talents of others. Squirm, you leech, squirm! It is but a small price to pay for all the money you'll be raking in hand over fist from the other 98% of your customers.

10.) No matter how many countless cels and other collectibles of every imaginable sort that Warner Bros. produces, they will never, ever glut the market.

At least that's how it would seem. God bless Bugs Bunny and Taz and millions of stupid consumers worldwide. These are the rabbits, Tasmanian Devils and people who will make you, as an animation art dealer, very rich.

Tim Stocoak, a disgruntled former animation art gallery employee, is the editor of BEA & EFF, a zine about the ridiculous world of animation art collecting.

MIPCOM 1997:

Animation, Animation Everywhere

by Adam Snyder

Walking onto the floor of this year's MIPCOM television trade show, held September 26-30 in Cannes, was, as usual, daunting; particularly for a small independent animation producer like myself, devoid of expense account, his own stand, or extensive contacts culled from decades in the business. The first thing one notices are the hundreds - no, the thousands - of animated titles jumping out from seemingly every one of more than 100 booths.

Just from the Japanese company Tokyo Broadcast System, I counted 45 different titles alone! The booth of the German company BetaFilm was wall-papered with glossy color brochures for dozens of animated series like *Peter of Placid Forest* ("Placid no more, the forest is thrown into an uproar when the hungry buzz of the chainsaw announces trouble"), *Perrine* ("Join a spunky little girl as she fearlessly makes her way across Europe"), and *The Ketchup Vampires* ("Meet Dracula's quirky descendants - a new breed of vegetarian vampires"). Even in this catsup category there was intense competition. The Australian company, Southern Star was offering an animated series called *Ketchup: Cats Who Cook*.

The Australian company, Southern Star's animated series Ketchup: Cats Who Cook. The series is now sold or under negotiation in 30 territories worldwide. © 1997 Southern Star Entertainment Pty and NHK.

Cutting Through the Clutter

Some sellers are trying to cope with the glut by branching out into live-action. Sunbow Entertainment, for example, was busy selling its first two live-action series, *Deepwater Black* and *Student Bodies*. Others try to stand out with brand names, like Nickelodeon's *Hey Arnold*, Saban's array of well known super heroes, and the legendary *The Smurfs*. In fact, *The Smurfs*, which is on television in 30 countries, had a booth all to itself.

"Everyone is looking for a way to cut through the clutter, and one way is with an identifiable character," explained Chantal Bazelaire, operations officer for a new French company, European Creative Productions, which has obtained rights to the Marx Brothers characters and is looking for partners to turn them into an animated series.

Another constant is the regurgitation of literary classics. There were at least a dozen versions of *A Christmas Carol*, including an 85-minute feature from the German company IgelFilm.

Many of these projects are brought to MIPCOM in search of funding; sometimes with a full pilot, sometimes with a sample reel of a minute or so, sometimes with just a storyboard. Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI) was offering ten animated pilots, six projects in development and another dozen titles in various stages of production.

The first thing one notices are the hundreds - no, the thousands - of animated titles jumping out from seemingly every one of more than 100 booths.

A number of producers were offering more serious fare, to contrast with the more antiseptic, Western made-for-television series. For example, newly packaged programs from animation-rich eastern Europe attracted a lot of attention. According to Regina Billings, Director of Sales for Films by Jove, at least a dozen deals were closed for *Masters of Russian Animation*, a repackaging of classic Russian animation from the '70s and '80s.

"There's still room for unique product," said Sjoerd Raemakers, business manager at the Dutch company Palm Plus Productions

The Smurfs booth at MIPCOM '97, on the wall is a unique catch phrase, "The World's Greatest Blue Characters." Photo by Alisa Anderson.

which distributes my own two series which are compilations of classic animation from Zagreb Film and the Sofia Animation Studio.

"Everyone is looking for a way to cut through the clutter..." - Chantal Bazelaire

Producers can take comfort, however, from the explosion of new television channels around the world, many specifically aimed at children. Plus, partly due to European sensibilities, and partly because of increased pressure in the United States for FCC-friendly fare, animated offerings don't seem nearly so dominated by robots from outer space wielding big guns as they did just a few years ago.

Reed Midem is Always a Winner

The one thing all participants readily agreed upon was that we were all in the wrong business - that MIP and MIPCOM's organizer, Reed Midem, was the only company guaranteed to make a huge profit. The smallest booth cost $7,000 for the five days, and many participants could be heard grousing that in order to obtain a prime location it was "suggested" that they place a full page advertisement in the show's daily magazine, MIPCOM News. The owner of one small European company estimates it costs him more than $50,000 to send three executives to staff a modest booth. He has to repeat the entire process, and price, again for MIP, the equivalent Spring show also held in Cannes.

Maxi Cat, from Rembrandt Films' Maxi Cat and Friends series, created by Adam Snyder, is being distributed through the Dutch company, Palm Plus Productions. © 1997 Zagreb Film/Rembrandt Films.

But Gary Lico of Cable Ready, a U.S. distributor of non-fiction programs, argued that despite the higher cost, MIP and MIPCOM are "much more democratic" than NATPE, the U.S. television trade show held each January. Smaller companies at NATPE are dwarfed by the giant booths of Paramount, Warner Bros., Disney, and the like, which often include lavish buffets and open bars. However in Cannes, the entire convention center, aptly named the Palais, is comparatively tiny, with small ceilings and cramped spaces even for the largest of studios.

MIPCOM Junior

Some production companies find it economical to forego MIPCOM altogether and participate only in MIPCOM Jr., a two-day children's screening event that precedes the main show. That's what Kratky Film, the Czech Republic's esteemed animation studio decided to do. John Riley, the studio's head of international sales, says it was well worth it. "For $2,000 we were able to offer several projects we have in development to buyers around the world," he explained. "Viewers check out the tapes by scanning their badge's bar code, so we got a list of fifty potential buyers. Hey, Haim Saban himself watched our Studio's presentation cassette."

A record 330 buyers watched 622 titles in more than 9,000 individual screenings at this year's MIPCOM Junior, and more than half were animation. Participation was by no means restricted to the smaller companies. The two most frequently screened programs were Columbia TriStar's *Men in Black* and Film Roman's *The Blues Brothers Animated Series*.

"There's still room for unique product." - Sjoerd Raemakers

So, what's the lesson for the small independent company? You can't compete with *Rugrats* and don't even try to compete with the raft of second tier animation. Instead, find or create something unique — then shamelessly bend the ear of everyone you meet, can spill a drink on, or overhear saying the word, "animation." No one has heard of Rembrandt Films, but when I tell buyers that I am the exclusive distributor of all 600 films from the legendary Zagreb Film animation studio, many of them want to sit down and talk. Equally important, of course, is to partner with a distributor who has a presence on the floor of MIPCOM and MIP and who shares your enthusiasm for your product.

These are the only ways I can think of to stand out, even in a small way, in an always competitive, sometimes intimidating, standing room-only crowd.

Adam Snyder is President of Rembrandt Films, producer of Nudnik and Friends, *distributed by Sunbow Entertainment, and several other series distributed by Palm Plus Productions, including classic animation from Zagreb Film and the Sofia Animation Studio, which are packaged into two thirteen part series,* Maxicat and Friends *and* Three Fools and Friends *respectively. This was his second MIPCOM.*

Cartoon Forum in Arles:
business as usual

by Heikki Jokinen

Editor's Note: For more information on CARTOON, see Heikki Jokinen's article, "Europe Strikes Back," in our October issue, in which he outlines the purposes of CARTOON and its role in Europe.

Business was as usual at the eighth Cartoon Forum in Arles, France held from September 18-20. Ninety-two European broadcasters, along with 82 distributors and other financiers like video and licensing companies, came together to judge the fate of 69 new animation projects. The Cartoon Forum is the annual co-financing event of CARTOON, the European Union backed organization designed to spur on the European animation industry. CARTOON is a part of MEDIA II, a project of the European Union.

This Year's Projects

The proposed projects were mainly television serials for children; exceptions like feature films or television programs for adolescent or adult audiences were rare. The ideas were also often based on comics or children's books, as it is much more simple to introduce a television series, both for financiers and the audience, with familiar and well-known heroes. It helps with possible licensing, too!

The origin of projects clearly show where the stronghold of the European animation industry is: 25 out of the 69 projects were French. France was followed by the United Kingdom with 15 projects and Germany with 10 projects. The CARTOON rules favor countries with small productions, but in the real world big productions are king. Serials from countries with small animation industries that actually go into production are few and far between. The Cartoon Forum exists for business purposes, not to defend European cultural diversity.

By the end of the Cartoon Forum, producers decided that 21 projects "received sufficient interest to secure their interest in the short term." In other words, they received promises for the required money. Among these projects is the television series, *The Big Knights*, composed of 13-ten minutes episodes. This somewhat naively drawn, humorous series is directed by Mark Baker and Neville Astley. *Au clair de la lune* (*Tune of the Moon*) is a French-German co-production with an astonishing 104 five-minute episodes. This cute serial is a bedtime-type story for 2-5 year-old children.

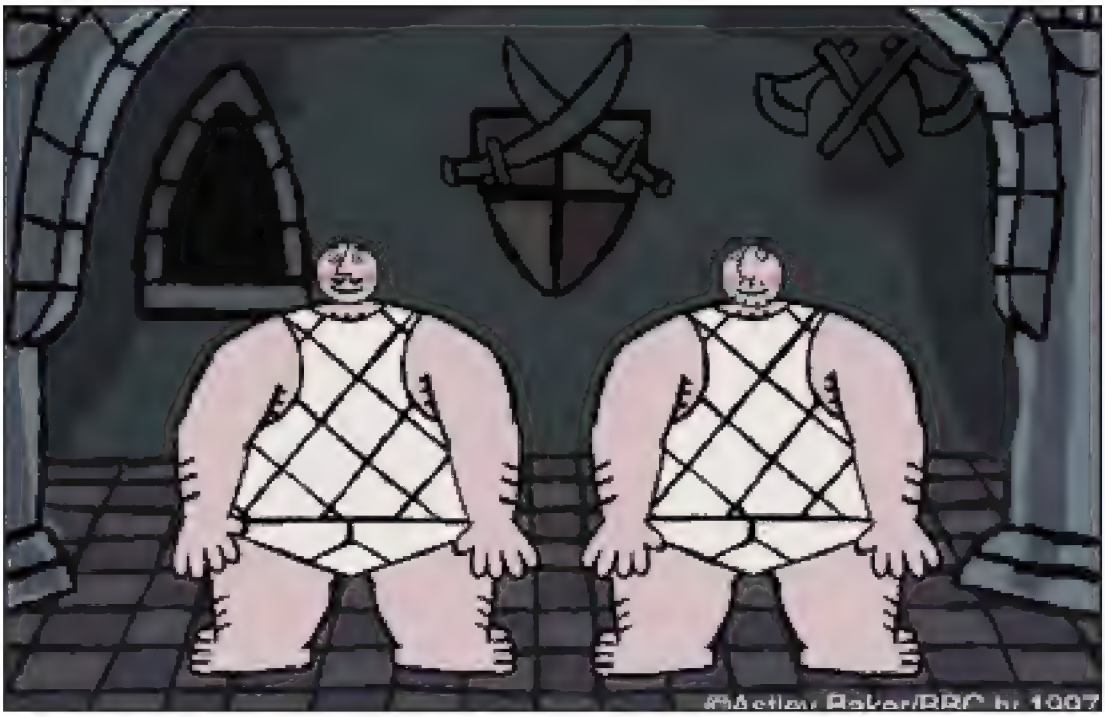
Another 24 projects received enough assurances of money "to secure their financing in the medium term." Among these was a Finnish television serial by Estonian animator Priit Pärn. The absurd story called *The Hare and the Wired Sock* combines Pärn's fine lines with 3-D computer animation.

Not all of these projects will be completed though. Usually only 25-40% of the projects presented at the Cartoon Forum are actually finished. In most cases it takes several years.

Diversity and Growth

The Cartoon Forum exhibits another important characteristic of European animation - it isn't only traditional, cel animation. On other

continents, the commercial forms of puppet and clay animation are very rare. In Europe, however, the tradition is alive and well, especially in the former socialist countries, and of course, we can't forget Aardman Animations' Wallace and Gromit.



The Big Knights by Neville Astley and Mark Baker. © 1997 Astley Baker/BBC Television

The growth of Europe's animation industry has been very fast. Before CARTOON's start in 1988, there weren't any 26 half-hour episode series being done in Europe. Now there are several every year. The French Union of Animation Film Producers surveyed European television channels about their animation programs. Though only a few television channels replied, the results were published in Arles. One development was clear: the share of European animation on European television has grown, and Japanese animation has decreased. U.S. animation seems to have more or less kept it's position at 20-50% of most channels' programming. German channels WDR Cologne and Premiere, and Italy's RAI DUE only program 10% of their schedules with U.S. animation, but Ireland's RTE and the MegaChannel in Greece both show 80%.

Studios Over the Borders

CARTOON has succeeded in getting small European studios to work together over national borders. Many of the studio groupings established from 1989-95, during the European Union's MEDIA I program, are working fine, even without CARTOON's initial financial support. Some of these now even have contacts outside of Europe as well.

By the end of the Cartoon Forum, producers decided that 21 projects "received sufficient interest to secure their interest in the short term."

Robin Lyons of the U.K.'s Siriol Productions is partnered with La Fabrique from France, Sofidoc from Belgium and Cologne Cartoon from Germany to form the studio grouping EVA. "We were the first group. That explains the name," he says about EVA, which was started in 1989. According to Lyons, the most positive CARTOON experience is that it is easier to begin new productions. All of the ideas are discussed carefully together, which helps to evaluate the possibilities for international success. "If Germans say that some idea doesn't work there, we can make changes," Lyons says. Every studio, however, does not have to be involved in every single project completed by EVA. Partners can also be found elsewhere. "Now we are cooperating with another French studio," Lyons explains. "It is, however, recommended by our French partner."

And there are still new groupings popping up. Under the MEDIA II program, which began last year, CARTOON supports six new studio groupings. These groupings are not working together, however, in a uniform way. On the contrary, they are trying to find their own work and success. Animbase is composed of studios in Greece, Italy

The Old Lady and the Pigeons, the winner of the Cartoon d'Or for 1997. © Sylvain Chomet.

Death and the Mother by Ruth Lingford received an honorary mention at the 1997 Cartoon Forum. © Ruth Lingford/Channel 4.

and France, and specializes in new technology with aims to become a complete virtual studio. Fabel, which links three studios in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, works on feature films. The studios have already made a total of seven features.

The origin of projects clearly show where the stronghold of the European animation industry is...

One More Prize for Sylvain Chomet

The Cartoon d'Or is CARTOON's annual prize for the best animated piece. It is selected from the winners or finalists of the six European animation film festivals with which CARTOON is cooperating. The prize is 35,000 ecu, which stands for European Currency Unit, the official EU monetary unit which is generally equivalent to U.S. $1.09. The money is to be used for another production, which this time should be a suitable length for a normal television programming slot.

This year's prize was no surprise. It went to Frenchman Sylvain Chomet for his film *La vieille dame et les pigeons* (*The Old Lady and the Pigeons*). The main aim of the prize is to integrate suitable talent into the animation industry. Chomet's film and style has a clear commercial potential. *The Old Lady and the Pigeons* has already received the Grand Prix at the Annecy Festival and at the Los Angeles World Animation Celebration. The jury also gave a honorary mention to Ruth Lingford from the U.K for her film *Death and the Mother.* This film is a trip to our common myths; a strong story about a mother's sorrow and fight in the face of her child's death.

Next Stop: Licensing

CARTOON has a good reputation within MEDIA, and the Cartoon Forum has been without a doubt a success, but what plans does CARTOON have for the future? "European animation production is well developed today. Now it is time to work on licensing," says CARTOON director Corinne Jenart. "There are enough well known serials to start licensing and merchandising. We have the best animators in the world, but no licensing."

Jenart is planning the next steps. Whatever CARTOON will do, it has to be well-prepared in conjunction with professionals, she clearly states. "That's how we started the Cartoon Forum, we discussed the concept carefully with professionals." This discussion process is currently underway. Last summer CARTOON organized a licensing conference at MIFA, the market at Annecy. "I do not know yet whether we will organize something in connection with the Cartoon Forum or whether it will be something separate," Jenart says. "But if we do something, it will have to be well done from the very beginning," she underlines. "I do not want to organize an unsuccessful event."

The Cartoon Forum exhibits another important characteristic of European animation - it isn't only traditional, cel animation.

Jenart also sees that it is important to develop the distribution of European animated features. There is a growing interest for animation in cinemas, she says. "But the main problem is distribution. We have no network for it. Take a Danish feature, it doesn't cross the border." There is European product, but it is only seen in small theaters and festivals. "This is what I want to develop," Jenart says. "But it won't be easy. Disney has a kind of monopoly. There are theaters which cannot screen animation other than Disney. Otherwise they will loose the Disney films, which are a source of secure revenue for cinemas."

Stay tuned to AWN's *Animation Flash* newsletter for the dates of next year's Cartoon Forum.

Heikki Jokinen is a freelance journalist and critic specializing in animation, short film and comics. He lives in Helsinki, Finland and is a board member of ASIFA-Nordic, the ASIFA regional organization for the five Nordic and three Baltic states. This Cartoon Forum is the fifth one in which he has participated.

Anastasia
Fox's Great Hope

by Harvey Deneroff

©Twentieth Century Fox.

Last spring, when I saw the first half hour of *Anastasia* as a work-in-progress, I really did not know what to expect. Like many others, I wasn't really sure how Marcelle Maurette's play was going to be turned into an animated musical. The film's prologue initially didn't seem to help matters much, given its seemingly reckless disregard for some of the niceties of Russian history; thus, the 300th anniversary celebration of the Romanov Dynasty, the Russian Revolution, the slaying of the imperial family, and the death of Rasputin all occur on one winter's night in 1916! Whatever happened to World War I? The date and method of Rasputin's final demise is sort of right, but what's with him putting a curse on the Romanovs and bringing on the Revolution?* Yet, *Anastasia* turns out to be an utterly delightful film, much of which was totally unexpected, as in some ways it is completely unlike anything Don Bluth has ever done before.

The part that really convinced me that something special was happening was the wacky but inspired sequence in limbo, where Rasputin (voiced by Christopher Lloyd) has been moldering for the 10 years since his death. His old aide-de-camp, Bartok, an albino bat (Hank Azaria), "drops in" and informs him that Anastasia is still alive. In his excitement, Rasputin starts to fall literally apart, a fact to which he seems oblivious. Then, recovering his dark powers, he sends his minions off to kill Anastasia, singing "In the Dark of the Night," a wonderful mixture of rock and traditional Russian choral music, with a gaggle of wormettes providing backup.

The effectiveness of this and other scenes is heightened by the overall realism of the character design and the live-action styled mise-en-scène and editing. Blessedly, there is nothing like the gargoyles in Disney's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* to dumb down the film and ruin its narrative flow.

Anastasia is in some ways completely unlike anything Don Bluth has ever done before.

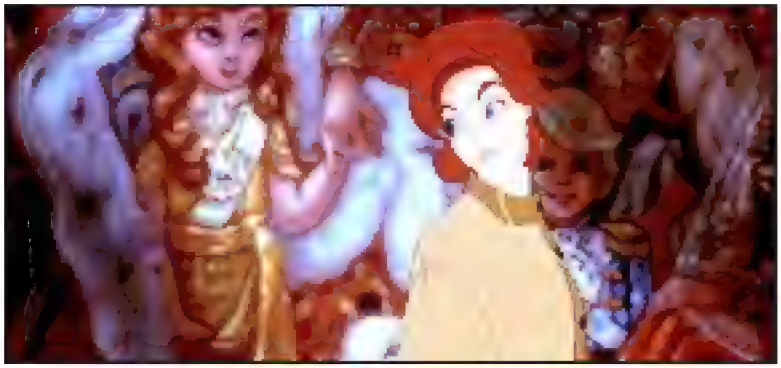
The Tale

The story has an 8-year-old Anastasia (yes, she lost a few years in the script) escaping from the Revolution with her grandmother, the Grand Duchess Marie (Angela Lansbury), and inadvertently causing Rasputin's demise. The two get separated, Anastasia is knocked unconscious and gets left behind. The action picks up 10 years later, when Anastasia, known only as Anya (Meg Ryan) is trying to track down her past, whose only clue is a locket saying, "Together in Paris." In doing so, she falls in with two amiable con men, Dimitri (John Cusack), a former kitchen boy in the imperial palace, and Vladimir (Kelsey Grammar), a down-and-out aristocrat. The pair trick Anya into posing as Anastasia with the hopes of get-

Rasputin, Anastasia's character of necessary evil, with his adorable side-kick, Bartok. ©Twentieth Century Fox.

ting a 10 million ruble reward from the Dowager Empress, who now lives in Paris. With Rasputin in pursuit, the trio's journey to Paris provides opportunities for a spectacular train wreck sequence and a turbulent storm at sea. Through all this, Anya's memories start to return, although she turns out to be the last one to realize who she really is.

Anastasia is a sentimental retelling of the legend surrounding the Grand Duchess Anastasia Nicholaievna, the youngest daughter of Tsar Nicholas and Tsarina Alexandra. While the tale has long captured the imagination of the public, the film's sentiment is surprisingly subdued and effective. This is helped by the way the script occasionally mocks some Disney-style clichés that occasionally pop up in the dialogue. Only the character of Pooka, the dog who serves as Anastasia's guardian angel, tends to be a bit cloying; but this is mitigated by the fact that he largely remains in the background and doesn't speak.



The vagabond orphan Anastasia unknowingly wanders past a portrait of herself as a child. ©Twentieth Century Fox.

The History

The public's fascination with Anastasia largely centered on the case of Anna Anderson, who surfaced in Berlin in 1920 claiming to be the lost princess. Her claim gained some credibility due to the Soviet government's cover up of the slayings of the royal family in 1918. They initially only admitted that Nicholas had been killed. The Soviet silence was prompted by political considerations, as they did not want to offend Germany, with whom they had just signed a World War I peace treaty. Alexandra was, after all, a German princess before she became a Russian tsarina. Interestingly enough, an examination of the royal family's remains unearthed in 1991 showed the remains of Anastasia and her brother, the Tsarevitch Alexei, to be missing; however, a DNA analysis of Anderson's tissues indicated she was not the Grand Duchess.

Thus, when Bluth and Goldman were set up as principal producer/directors at the new Fox Animation Studios in Phoenix, the buzz around Hollywood was often less than positive.

Anderson's story served as the basis for a number of books, plays and screen treatments. The most familiar are based on Guy Bolton's English-language adaptation of the Maurette play. The 1956 Fox film (which served as the vehicle for Ingrid Bergman's return to Hollywood), a 1967 Hallmark Hall of Fame TV movie (for which Lynn Fontaine came out of retirement to play the Dowager Empress), and even a musical, *I, Anastasia,* which was staged in Miami, are all adaptations from this source material. The current film is based more on the 1956 film version directed by Anatole Litvak, rather than the original play, though it obviously takes considerable liberties with its source material, changing it from a drama into a high flying, romantic adventure comedy. In particular, the writers latched on to the Pygmalion aspects of the older film, which can be seen in the relationship between Yul Brynner and Ingrid Bergman. Bluth's character design for Anastasia is heavily based on Audrey Hepburn, who starred in the screen version of *My Fair Lady,* to which he pays homage in one shot in the second half of the film.

Don Bluth, along with his long-time collaborator Gary Goldman, has had a checkered career, which initially generated considerable passion and enthusiasm; however, much of this enthu-

Don Bluth (seated) and Gary Goldman. ©Twentieth Century Fox.

siasm waned among some aficionados, who felt his later films betrayed his promise of reviving the classic Disney style and techniques. While their initial feature effort, *The Secret of NIHM*, did not do well at the box office, their next two, done for Steven Spielberg - *An American Tail* and *The Land Before Time* (co-produced by George Lucas) - went head-to-head with Disney in the mid-1980s, and lived to tell the tale. Bluth then broke with Spielberg. His subsequent efforts, made in Dublin, seemed to flounder both artistically and financially, as the animation renaissance, which he and his partners helped start, seemed to pass him by.

Thus, when Bluth and Goldman were set up as principal producer/directors at the new Fox Animation Studios in Phoenix, the buzz around Hollywood was often less than positive. But in the end, 20th Century-Fox's gamble would appear to have paid off. Bluth's success with *Anastasia* seems due to a strong script, a first-rate pair of songwriters in Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty (who concurrently wrote the songs for the stage version of *Ragtime*), and the support of animation-wise executives, many of whom were Disney veterans.

Disney, it is clear, is pulling out all the stops to derail Anastasia and protect its valuable animation franchise.

The Battle

Even before it opens, the film has taken on an importance seemingly all out of proportion to reality. To judge by most commentators in the business and trade press, the very future of non-Disney animated features hangs in the balance, as 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros., with *The Quest for Camelot*, and DreamWorks SKG, with *The Prince of Egypt*, prepare for a veritable Armageddon against the forces of Disney.

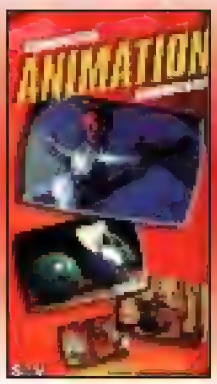
Ah, what would an animated musical be without love? ©Twentieth Century Fox.

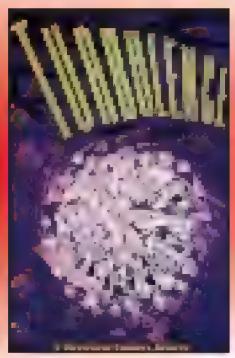
Disney, it is clear, is pulling out all the stops to derail *Anastasia* and protect its valuable animation franchise. First, Disney is reissuing *The Little Mermaid* followed by *Flubber*, a remake of *The Absent-Minded Professor* starring Robin Williams. They are probably also annoyed that people are coming into their local Disney Stores asking for *Anastasia* merchandise, a perception that Fox does not seem in any hurry to correct. However, Don Bluth and Gary Goldman have made a successful effort to break away from the by-now creaky Disney formula, and it is considerably better than anything the Mouse House has done of late. While I can't tell for sure how the battle of the animated titans is going to turn, I can unequivocally recommend *Anastasia*.

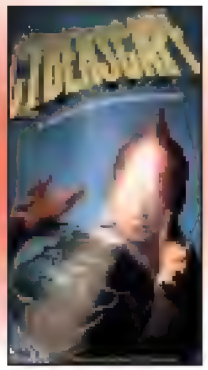
*It turns out, according to Edvard Radzinsky's book, *The Last Tsar: The Life and Death of Nicholas II*, that Rasputin actually did threaten to put a curse on the Romanovs. If one of the tsar's family killed him, Rasputin predicted that the imperial family would be killed within two years by "the Russian people." It was this revelation and Radzinksy's conclusion that the Revolution thus started with Rasputin's death that was crucial in the development of the character in the film.

Harvey Deneroff is editor and publisher of The Animation Report, *an industry newsletter, author of* The Art of Anastasia *(HarperCollins) and the former editor of* Animation World Magazine.

The Odyssey Video Collection of Computer Animation: The Good, The Bad and the Brilliant







Reviewed by Judith Cockman

Oh, what fun the animators of the last decade and a half are having! Those who are creating with computers are taking us on journeys into the center of our minds' eyes and, the best of them at least, are stirring the emotional pot that simmers within all humans.

Call me naive, but some of the artwork still amazes me. As entire computer-animated feature films come hurtling into view, I guess I should be a little more world-weary about the results. But I cannot wrap my head around the fact that a mouse, keyboard and silicone chips are the capable tools of such mastery as offered in some of Odyssey's collection. Odyssey Video has recently released through Sony Music Video four new titles: *Computer Animation Classics, Computer Animation Showcase, Cyberscape* and Turbulence.

Grab Your Popcorn

Some of these techno Van Gogh's manipulate the tools of their burgeoning trade with true glee. As witnessed in *Computer Animation Classics*, the pioneers of computer animation set the standard in the '80s with imagination and heart.

If it's your idea of a good time to sit down with popcorn in front of computer animation, the *Computer Animation Showcase* and *Classics* videos offer up morsels of entertainment in three-dimensionality that can give the Road Runner a run for his money. Not in silliness necessarily, but certainly in satisfaction. A mix of funny and touching, both videos are great rides through the world of brilliant animation.

Some of these techno Van Gogh's manipulate the tools of their burgeoning trade with true glee.

Artistry and Skill Not Necessarily Synonymous

Sadly, not all videos are created equal. Where artistry and skill alone part ways is annoyingly evident in the offering of award-winning Beny Tchaicovsky's *Cyberscape*.

Tchaicovsky is unarguably a terrific technician. He may even occasion a point of view or two, albeit in a deafeningly repetitious manner. But he certainly doesn't deliver the "surreal history of the evolution of human life and thought" that the Odyssey marketers would have us believe. If indeed, there is cerebral candy to be eaten here, it's two-cent licorice, not fine chocolate.

Tchaicovsky's lack of emotional commitment to the work is tiring. One can only witness so many robotic men marching to the tune of the same drummer. True, their heads may change ... we have apple heads, block heads, globe heads, cow heads; none-the-less, they all march with similar purpose and an excrutiating lack of humanity. Not to mention imagination.

Music Is The Critical Component

Peter Bernstein's music only makes *Cyberscape* worse, I'm afraid - a synthesized attempt dominated by the dreaded sound of a drum machine that directly mirrors the one-dimensionality of the video. I could have sworn I was hearing the same riff over and over. It's tinny and tedious and does very little to illuminate the imagery. Odyssey calls it "mesmerizing." I call it mind-numbing.

One can only witness so many robotic men marching to the tune of the same drummer.

The one song in the piece, "A Different World," is embarassingly immature. The lyrics, such as, "A perfect island in the stream, Where life is kind and love is free," would be a proud addition to a seventeen year-old aspiring song writer's repertoire, but has no place in a $15.00 video touted as a "journey into our undiscovered self."

The best animation proffered

by these Odyssey tapes weaves seamlessly with the music. In fact in some, such as *Beyond The Walls*, produced by Animusic and the grand finale on the *Computer Animation Showcase* video, the music becomes the storyteller and the animation an organic outpouring celebrating it. Composed by Wayne Lytle, each note is made stunningly visual through an amalgam of highly personalized drums, horns and laser beams.

The raison d'etre of the final offering on the *Computer Animation Classics* video is, in fact, the song itself - Mick Jagger's *Hard Woman*, a ground breaking music video produced in '86. The magic of this animation allows a series of spirals to actually ooze sexuality in the form of a female Mick alter ego, highlighting one of the delights of the more brilliant of these shorts ... that of creating mankind from abstract form.

Ultimately, it's the superiority of the storytelling fused with skill that divides the fine from the brilliant in this wonderful medium.

Storytelling and Laughter, We Want To Be Touched

For all of it's majesty of skill, the characters of Tchaicovsky's *Cyberscape* elicit no recognition of the human experience. Contrast that with the mere line drawings of Steve Segal's *Dance of the Stumblers* rendered to music by Rimski Korsakov on *Computer Animation Classics*. With glorious simplicity, we are allowed to applaud ourselves through the interpretation of these squiggles, recognizing ourselves as adept and graceful, athletic and balletic even as we stumble and trip in the effort. We may hurt ourselves, but we support each other, and turn nonsense into whimsy in the process.

Ultimately, it's the superiority of the storytelling fused with skill that divides the fine from the brilliant in this wonderful medium. The animator that is moved by his or her story and can equally translate the human experience into the artwork triumphs with their work. A great example of this is *Tony de Peltrie* on the *Classics* video: a baby grand on a gorgeous hardwood floor with true stage lighting and Tony, a washed up, enormously-chinned lounge player tickling the ivories as he silently reminisces about the good old days. As his voice-over tells the tale, his magnificent face lives it. What a remarkable evocation of deeply felt memory. What great music. Until, in sadness and fatigue, he's turned to stone and wind-chipped away until no part of him is left behind but the piano ... on a gorgeous hardwood stage, beautifully lit, awaiting the next entertainer to sit down to its spell.

Of course, the humorous anecdotes are appreciated in the midst of the contemplative and both the *Classics* and the *Showcase* videos have their share. A short, but infinitely sweet example on the *Showcase* video, is a commercial for a potato chip product called Bluebirds. The ominous introduction of a shark slicing through the water evolves into a funny episode of a penguin showing off on water skis, unexpectedly being launched into a precarious and bumpy ride, while being wildly cheered and applauded with scores of 9's and 10's by a platoon of penguins on a glacier peak. The piece has humor, great storytelling and human characterization all wrapped up in great animation.

Turbulence: In A League Of It's Own

The fourth offering from this Odyssey library, the first Prize Winner of Images du Future, *Turbulence* by Jon McCormack, stands in a league of it's own. It succeeds where *Cyberscape* failed in that it offers great depth behind it's showmanship. If the imagery is often ambiguous, it's meaning, somehow, is not. It excites us on a primal level that we understand intuitively. Even as McCormack offers us insight into the human/divine condition, he honors its mystery.

The entire video is rife with provocative imagery. A mere example is that of alien-looking fixtures, opening and spinning, transporting us to an existential field of universal thought processes. Through the marriage of the artistry to the sound track, we are connected with human energy fields receptive to enlightened sonar systems in space.

Turbulence by Jon McCormack, stands in a league of it's own.

Each segment of *Turbulence*, and the additional two shorts, *ENS* and *TISA* , has a fluidity that sails easily from concept to concept, titillating our thought processes even as it regales us with glorious imagery and music. Photographic images are fused into the piece, and the music and soundtrack are truly integral to both the images and the intent. "Outside knowledge begotten in earnest," the voice-over intones, and we believe her.

The ending of *Turbulence* , a desert regeneration that sounds dry even as it promulgates remarkable creation, displays a desperation of energy, an urgent need to be born. A metaphor, perhaps, for the dreams of it's author.

Computer Animation Classics. 27 films by various artists, 55 minutes.
Computer Animation Showcase. 21 films by various artists, 46 minutes.
Cyberscape by Beny Tchaicovsky, 45 minutes.
Turbulence by Jon McCormack, 30 minutes.

All four titles are available for $14.98 each from Sony Music Video.

Judith Cockman, a Canadian currently living in Los Angeles, is a playwright, award-winning documentary writer, actor and journalist. She has written about animation for The Toronto Star, Kidscreen Magazine *and* SPLAT!, *a behind-the-scenes-type television series about the world of animation.*

Smash: A Fast Moving Thesis

Film review by Don Perro

In a world of darkness, there is a flash of white as the title of this experimental film appears. The main credits roll past a background of black and white and gray to the striking percussion of a sullen dark score.

Suddenly, a light, almost playful melody begins and a rapid montage of images, lasting only a few frames each, flash on the screen, allowing barely enough time for interpretation: a bare torso being dressed; a faucet; a knife buttering bread; a ring of keys being picked up; a women walking through a doorway; a fast commute past city skyscrapers. We seem to be watching a "day in the life," although it soon becomes *days* in a life as several of the images suggesting commuting and office work begin to repeat themselves. The pace of the music and machine gun editing becomes more frantic. As the melody reaches its crescendo, the scenes rush by until a white block of light hits us dead on and we roll slowly to a stop. Fade to black. The mood of the music reverts back to its somber origins and the images become abstract movements of gray with short flashbacks from the previous scenes of the daily cycle.

Kirsten Winter's latest experimental animated film, Smash. © 1997 Kirsten Winter.

Frame By Frame

Smash is an experimental film produced and directed by German filmmaker, Kirsten Winter. It has a "paint-on-glass" look and includes live action images. The film is eight minutes and forty seconds in length and is a montage of moving images and music. The music, composed by Elena Kats-Chernin, is as important to the film as the imagery. As a work of art, the film is impressive, and really demands more than one screening for the viewer to be drawn into its flow. I watched it many times and often froze the picture to view scenes frame by frame. Only then was I able to make my own interpretation as to what the artist was saying. Unfortunately, when this type of experimental film plays in a festival the audience usually only sees it once. Films like these should be shown with other works of fine art in galleries where one can study every aspect of the piece.

Films like these should be shown with other works of fine art in galleries where one can study every aspect of the piece.

Two Distinct Worlds

It would be a difficult task for me to offer a more in-depth review of *Smash.* I can recommend it as art and I think if you approach the film from that angle, you will be moved by it. But I am not an artist as much as I am a craftsman. I enjoy all forms of animation, but am committed to training students in the techniques of characters and traditional storytelling. Abstract, experimental films in my opinion are so far removed from the world of character animation, that it is like comparing Rodin's *The Thinker* with the three inch toy statue of Buzz Lightyear standing on my desk.

Both world's are valid and both reach wide audiences. Problems arise however, when, at festivals for example, fans of *Ren and Stimpy* find they are sitting in the dark through what seems like hours of abstract shapes and sounds. It is probably about as annoying for them as it is for others to sit through "commercial" animation aimed at an audience looking for gags about hairballs.

Smash is a film that will definitely perform.

So, getting back to this particular film. If you are looking for humor, clear story-telling and character development, you won't find it here. But, if you enjoy experimental films and like to try to evoke meaning from a visual narrative that exists but is open to interpretation, *Smash* is a film that will definitely perform. It is a fast moving thesis on the idea of a routine life which becomes chaos which then becomes something else...

Don Perro is an animator/instructor who enjoys the challenge of training animation students for successful careers in the industry. He has made one experimental film in his life: a frame by frame tour of his 1977 KZ 650 motorcycle using a macro lens, one inch from the bike. It was never shown to anyone.

Speed Racer Lives Again

An Interview With J.J. Sedelmaier

by Heather Kenyon

It is Speed Racer's 30th Anniversary, and the animated speedster is showing up all over the place: commercials, on-air promos, television repeats, limited edition cels and even a commemorative book.

Keep a sharp eye out for four new 15-second *Speed Racer* promos that are currently running on Cartoon Network in the United States. The new Speed serial of "action spots" mix classic animation from the series along with new animation completed by J.J. Sedelmaier Productions in New York. Because the pieces spotlight the show's action content they are primarily airing during Cartoon Network's afternoon action block. The spots will also be airing in the future on Cartoon Network Latin America.

In the new book by Elizabeth Moran entitled *Speed Racer: The Official 30th Anniversary Guide*, an entire chapter is dedicated to J.J. Sedelmaier's award-winning, 1996 *Speed Racer* Volkswagen commercial. Other chapters include a trivia challenge, the history of the *Speed Racer* cartoon, a look at the real voices behind the animated characters and a Complete *Speed Racer* Episode Guide. J.J. Sedelmaier recently took some time out to speak with me about the spot and the book.

Heather Kenyon: How did the original *Speed Racer* Volkswagen commercial come to be?

J.J. Sedelmaier: Well, the concept, the idea, was generated out of Arnold Advertising in Boston. They were doing a cool, Baby Boomer-type campaign. I don't know if it's Baby Boomer or Generation X or whatever, but they were obviously hitting people my age (41) and a little younger, trying to sell Volkswagens, specifically the GTI. I got a call from somebody whom I've known for quite a long time, a producer over there, and he said that they were thinking of doing a spot in an old Japanese animation-type style. And I asked, "Well, anything specific?" and he said, "I can't get specific right now." So that afternoon, I pulled everything out of our library and our archive: *Astro Boy*, *Gigantor*, *Eighth Man*, *Speed Racer*, anything that I felt fit the bill. I edited together a tape and sent it to them. From what I understand, it

made a pretty cool impression on them right away.

When I found out that what they really wanted to do was to make a *Speed Racer* cartoon, I really went all-out. Then, once he mentioned it was for Volkswagen, I just started salivating. I thought, "Oh, my God! If these guys are going to approach this the right way, this could be a real zinger." I did something that I don't normally do. I made sketches, designs and models before even having the job, because I wanted this. I wanted this bad. (*laughs*) I knew I could have a great time, and everyone in the studio was going to have a good time with it too. That's one of the things that motivates me for bringing jobs in. I want to have something that we can really strut our stuff on.

I got a call from a producer over there, and he said that they were thinking of doing a spot in an old Japanese animation-type style.

So we finalized everything and then really started tearing apart the whole, not only the look and the texture, but also the pacing, the cutting and the angles. The only thing I needed [the agency's] coaching on was doing a car commercial, because I really was not well-versed in what it is that they need to concentrate on. Car commercials for the most part are pretty specific, and to do an entirely animated piece was going to be a real breakthrough thing to do. There was discussion at one point about trying to do a live-action car, [with] Speed Racer in it, but that would have been completely hokey. It wouldn't have been half as fun. So, I did a shooting board off of their rough storyboard, and then I did an animatic, because I knew that if I shot an animatic or basically, shot a photo board, that they would be able to get a pretty good feeling about what this thing would be like. The animation wasn't going to be real full and fluid, that's not what *Speed Racer* is about. *Speed Racer* is about attitude and angles and dynamics. So, I did a photo board and we set it to a scratch track that I recorded just using my voice, imitating the voices. They basically bought off on it pretty soon thereafter.

J.J. Sedelmaier created the 1996 Volkswagen commercial featuring Speed Racer. © 1996 Volkswagen of America, Arnold Advertising and J.J. Sedelmaier Productions.

As soon as they did, they said they wanted to use Corrine Orr who was the [original voice of] Spritle and Trixie. They were having trouble getting Peter Fernandez [the original voice of Speed and Racer X], and I [recommended] Billy West, [who I've worked with a lot], because I know what he is capable of and I know he could do Speed. As for Pops, he's pretty easy because he's so gruff. He's almost a caricature of himself. And Inspector Detector only has two words, one line with two words in it. Billy did a great audition for them right over the phone, and he grabbed Inspector Detector completely with two words. "Here, Speed!"

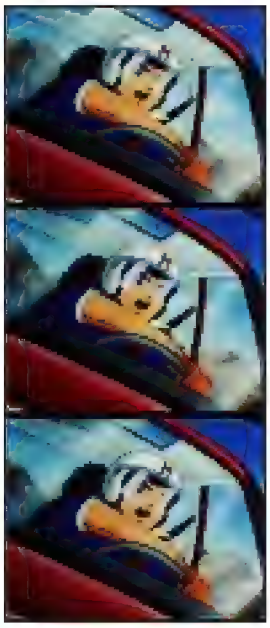
I wanted to do this conventionally. I didn't want to go into any sort of digital ink and paint or anything like that, because I felt that was going to blow it apart, and we had a decent enough budget, not a great schedule, but a decent enough budget where I could afford to do it conventionally, actually airbrushing everything and doing self-line shadow on stuff. Then, instead of just transferring the negative to video tape for the final transfer, we shot it, transferred it, then I had the print developed from the negative, took that print and had an interneg made and then transferred that interneg. There was just that much more grain on it so it would look a little old. It was starting to look too crisp. It was looking too new.

Speed Racer is about attitude and angles and dynamics.

HK: I was going to ask you about special steps that you took...

JJ: It wasn't anything special other than degrading it as much as I could. We didn't want to get into scratches, and we couldn't wash it out too much. It is trying to push the positive aspects of a car, so we decided to keep the color pretty much intact, but just add a lot of grain. The grain wasn't added in post. The grain was inherent in the negative. It feels different I think. You can simulate it but it isn't the same as actually grabbing it.

Once [the spot] hit the air, then it really got fun because we pulled up stuff on the Internet where these die-hard, definitely time to get a life (*laughs*), *Speed Racer* fans are analyzing this cartoon. It's sad. They are saying things like, "Well, the second scene they've actually used footage from the fourteenth show where Pops is..." and I'm thinking, "Oh my God. Let them have fun, but man, you guys are way off!"



Go, Speed Racer, Go! © 1996 Volkswagen of America, Arnold Advertising and J.J. Sedelmaier Productions.

[The spot was] well-received. It had all the return and reaction that you want to get when you do something. It was just so gratifying. At the agency, [Arnold Advertising], Ron Lawner started out with Alan Pafenbach, Lance Jensen and Bill Goodell; they were like the guardians of this commercial that they were bestowing on us. But once we got our hands on it, and really started playing with it, they came to realize how well we knew it, and how well we where cradling it. At one point, they were trying to figure out what to do with the music track. They were thinking of doing kind of like The Go-Go's, a female chorus singing. I was pleading with them, trying to get them to understand how it's important to make it feel like this is Speed driving your car. This should feel like a *Speed Racer* cartoon. Don't try to take him out of his element, because visually, he's not out of his element, he's completely in it. At a certain point, it was terrific, they said, "We didn't know what you guys were up to, but you have completely nailed this beyond what we would have ever imagined." That was good to hear after they had decided to keep the music intact, and it was like we now had become the guardians of [the spot]. The whole process was very good, with a lot of back and forth of the healthy kind. It helped the project get better and better, and that's what it should be about.

HK: Did you have to get a lot of approvals from the *Speed Racer* rights holders, the Rocknowskis?

JJ: No, none whatsoever. I did speak with him, but this was actually after we finished the Cartoon Network spots. I realized, "I haven't spoken to him, and I might just as well call and say hello." He basically sold the usage rights to Volkswagen and Arnold Advertising, and that was it. He didn't have any approval process or anything.

We ended up doing a poster or two, that was like the top poster last year or something in college dorms, and that was cool. We designed the poster. David Wachtenheim and Mike Wetterhahn who were the head animator and assistant animator on (the commercial), worked together on the print, which is great. It was just one of those magic projects.

HK: Did the crew enjoy the project as well?

Speed and his shiny new Volkswagen. © 1996 Volkswagen of America, Arnold Advertising and J.J. Sedelmaier Productions.

JJ: Oh yeah. Number one: they felt like they were apart of something that was going to get a lot of visibility, which is great. Here is a national spot that is going to get a lot of attention. It's a big name client. It's a first run on the Olympics, that's what our schedule was determined by. On top of that, we are working on something that we know we can nail, and if we do nail it as well as we know we can nail it, it's going to only blow people away that much more. It's not like it's coming out fresh and people have no baggage. People have so much baggage with something like this, that if you can, not only please them but fool them, that's what it's all about.

It was just one of those magic projects.

It's interesting, because my work centers around working with artists and translating their work to film, mostly cartoonists and illustrators and designers. Something like the *Speed Racer* spot really helps people who are in a position to work with us, understand how that translation process works. Once you tell them something like the *Speed Racer* thing was done from scratch, then they begin to comprehend, "So they just did this out of the studio, this isn't just moving stuff around." They really have got to understand how things work, what style is about and what approach is about to be able to translate this.

HK: What kind of research did you do? Did everyone sit around and

watch 20 episodes of *Speed Racer*?

JJ: That's essentially it. We came to realize how messed-up those [original episodes] are. (*laughs*) When we first noticed, it was right at the beginning when we had to construct models. We had to pass the models, the drawings that were going to determine what this thing was going to look like and what the characters where going to look like, by Lance and Alan at the agency. In order to do a model, you've got to decide on what the thing is going to look like in one drawing. Every single frame of film that we pulled up on any of the characters was completely different. The persistence of vision phenomenon that makes animation possible, how the brain fills in all the gaps when it's moving, is great but when you actually try to say, (a character) looks a certain way, you come to realize how loose the thing really was.

We came to realize how messed-up those [original episodes] are. Every single frame of film that we pulled up on any of the characters was completely different.

One thing that is very interesting is how they are able to bring across a very dynamic and full exciting feeling with relatively limited animation. It's not fully animated, but they move the camera around and dynamically animate everything in terms of point of view. The camera rises up and turns around and so on and so forth. It's not locked down. That does teach you how you're able to get across certain feelings without having to work on ones, twos or even fours sometimes. It's actually very static.

HK: Well, let's talk about the book now. You've been involved in the book, you have an entire chapter, what do you think? How does it rank as a book for fans?

JJ: I think it's better for someone who wants to have a *Speed Racer* compilation in their library as a reference piece. As a fan's book...fans are the hardest to please. It's a good piece, [but] it's too small.. It's everything it should be, but as a fan's [book], I don't think it will satisfy fans as much as a big hardcover coffee table sort of thing. On the other hand, most fans probably wouldn't be able to afford what that would entail. But I think it's got everything in it that it's supposed to have in it. I think [Elizabeth Moran] did get across what an impact *Speed Racer* has had on people, and that's what it should be about...giving examples and then backing it up. It's a modest treatment, but I think in the publishing industry, to get something like this done at all, you have to make a decision as to how far you're going to go with it. But I think it's great. I think you could still do an even more comprehensive "fandom" sort of thing. All you've got to do is stamp a limited edition on it and you're set for life. (*laughs*) It is nicely designed. I always find it interesting when Hyperion [Publishing] is willing to do something about [non-Disney] animation.

HK: Is there anything in this book that you wish you'd had before you went and made the cartoon?

JJ: The print aspect of it, which the book is, was not something we zeroed in on, because there's such a difference between print and film. I think the book would have been hanging around had it existed before we did the commercial. It would have been great so we could have seen how we did it.(*laughs*) But I don't think it would have been used as reference as much as the actual films were. I did go out and buy a Mach 5 model, one of these epoxy resin models, so we did have something tangible to tilt, hold and turn. That was very helpful, because the Mach 5 only exists in the most part in flat cartoon form. It was good to be able to move it around. I was even able to get a Volkswagen dealer to let me drive a GTI around so we could videotape that too.

HK: I know you worked hard to get Speed on the screen just right, but he's such a fun property with such a reputation, one would want to work with him.

JJ: I was not a big fan of *Speed Racer* before we started doing the commercial. I knew who he was, and I knew what I needed to know about him, but I was not at all apart of the cult that surrounded him, and I'm still not. But I've come to appreciate the "funness," but I've got to say it tongue-in-cheek. So much of this sort of thing is steeped in nostalgia, that once it goes beyond the reasonable attitude it's starts to get kind of silly. As long as you don't take it too seriously, it is fun.

Speed Racer: The Official 30th Anniversary Guide by Elizabeth Moran. Hyperion, 1997. 139 pages, illustrated. Paperback, $11.95; ISBN: 0-7868-8246-8.

Heather Kenyon is Editor-in-Chief of Animation World Magazine.

Warner Bros. Animation Art: Come Celebrate

Book review by Heidi Leigh

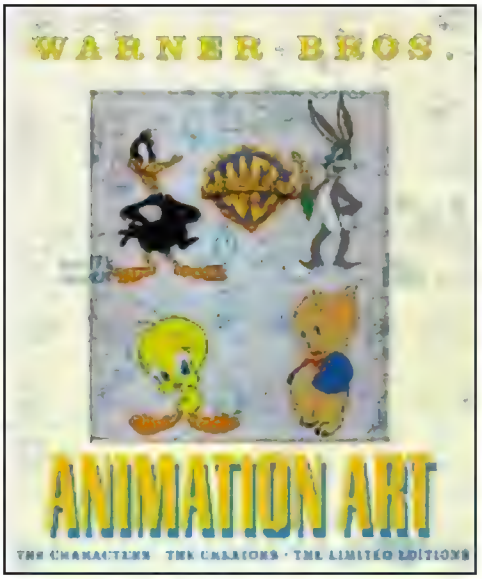
Warner Bros. Limited Edition Animation art collectors have a pictorial reference book at last! It's a big one too. If you don't have a coffee table, get one for *Warner Bros. Animation Art; The Characters. The Creators. The Limited Editions,* distributed by Simon & Schuster. All 245 pages are specially priced at $60.00 from now until the new year, at which time the price will increase to $75.00.

Beautiful Color Images

Silk-screened images of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig and Tweety grace the very dramatic cover that actually is a cel. Page two and three fold out to reveal a 30" full -color reproduction of a limited edition by Bob Clampett entitled *Corny Concerto* from the 1943 short titled the same. The colors are stunning, and more than 300 color reproductions of limited editions make this book an irresistible and essential addition to any cartoon fan's library.

If you don't have a coffee table, get one for Warner Bros. Animation Art;The Characters. The Creators.The Limited Editions...

The text is almost as colorful as the images. Authors Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald have as much trivia in their heads as any of the other Looney Tunes. They have definitely done some homework for the "Chronology: 1930 to the Present" portion of the book. I never knew exactly why Tex Avery quit in 1941... but now I do! Beck and Friedwald are both noted historians in the field of Warner Bros. cartoons and have written a number of books including "Looney Tunes and Merry Melodies," *the* reference bible for vintage trivia.



Interesting Information

Warner Bros. Animation Art presents the history of Hollywood animation and the Warner Bros. Studio itself, the famous characters, their creators and the limited editions. All of this information will practically turn a novice into a savvy collector. A visual index of every limited edition and sericel, from the very first piece "Duck Dodgers Group" in 1977 through 1997, is another reason to own this book. In fact, the only thing that this history of funny business is missing is an undertone of hilarity. The text is eloquent and dignified, but a bit dry. Perhaps it was edited by a corporate officer who forgot about the funny part?

A chapter written by Ruth Clampett is a breath of fresh air. She answers questions about the technical production of limited edition cels, and itemizes all of the reasons to fall in love with animation art. Ruth has been producing animation art since the early Eighties, and her knowledge and admiration for the art form has placed her in the top ranks of the art department at Warner Bros.

Celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Warner Bros. Studio with the first comprehensive historical and pictorial reference book for Warner Bros. contemporary animation art collectors and fans alike. That's all folks!

A visual index of every limited edition and sericel ... is another reason to own this book.

Warner Bros. Animation Art: The Characters, The Creators, The Limited Editions. by Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald. Beaux Arts Editions, 1997. 245 pages, illustrated. Hardcover, $60.00 (limited time); ISBN: 0-88363-360-4.

Heidi Leigh is an animation art collector and dealer with Animazing Gallery in New York.

ASIFA
–Hollywood as a Resource

Compiled and updated by Dave Crane

Animation is a crucial part of media today. Resources of all kinds need to be readily accessible to students, businesses, artists and writers, among others. Access to a variety of animation information is now available through many means, from the good old library method of research, to the vast Internet which probably brought you here today.

The International Animated Film Society,* ASIFA-Hollywood is a California non-profit organization established over twenty years ago. Dedicated to the advancement of the art of animation, this organization is home to both professionals *and* fans. We are also open to anyone else who we can help reach their animation-related goals and needs. With nearly 1,500 members around the world, this Los Angeles based chapter of ASIFA strives to achieve the following goals:

- Support and encourage animation education;
- Support the preservation and evaluation of animation history;
- Recognize achievements of excellence in the art and field of animation;
- Increase the public awareness of animation;
- Act as a liaison to encourage the free exchange of ideas within the animation community;
- Encourage journalism documenting current trends and activities in animation;
- Encourage the social interaction of professional and non-professional animation enthusiasts;
- Encourage the development and expression of all forms of animation.

ASIFA-Hollywood's Animation Center in Burbank, California houses a gallery, event space and animation art store, as well as the organization's offices. Photo courtesy of ASIFA-Hollywood.

To fulfill these goals, ASIFA-Hollywood sponsors the following programs and projects:

Dedicated to the advancement of the art of animation, this organization is home to both professionals and fans.

Animation Preservation Project

Prior to 1950, motion pictures were printed on unstable, flammable nitrate film stock that decomposed over time, placing many films by Ub Iwerks, Max Fleischer, Walter Lantz and George Pal (et. al.) in danger of being lost forever. Through the Animation Preservation Project, ASIFA-Hollywood seeks out and rescues endangered cartoons, and raises funds to preserve them on safety film stock.

Educational Support

The Stephen Bosustow and Art Babbitt Education Endowment Funds were established in memory of two of animation's greatest figures. Both the Bosustow and Babbitt endowments were created to fund programs in support of animation education. Currently, these funds are used to provide financial awards to qualified high-school students pursuing career studies in the field of animation.

ASIFA-Hollywood Animation Archives

The Archives act as a repository for the papers, production materials, publications and artwork of animation artists, organizations and studios, making them available to scholars, journalists and filmmakers. Currently, the archive acts as a repository for preservational purposes. Not all materials are available to the public but included in the collection are: animation reference books, standard production materials like timing sheets, scripts and affordable cels for sale. Most of the cels are from television commercials and shows. Commercials from the 1950s, as well as Snap, Crackle, and Pop and Tony the Tiger can be found, as can cels from *Scooby Doo*, *The Lone Ranger* and televi-

sion specials. Most of the cels are from the '60s through the '80s. Since then it has been harder and harder to find cels, as electronic ink and paint have become more popular. Our "animation art store" is open from 10:00 to 6:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Anyone can come by and go through the boxes of cels, but should call first to make sure our staff is in the office. All of our cels have been generously donated by production companies and the profits from their sale support ASIFA-Hollywood's efforts.

Included in the collection are: animation reference books, standard production materials like timing sheets, scripts and affordable cels for sale.

Animation Opportunities Expo

ASIFA-Hollywood's Animation Job Fair and Learning Series allows aspiring creative and support people to visit nearly all of the studios in one location. Companies set up booths at which they display future projects and recruit artists, while prospective employees meet valuable contacts and receive portfolio reviews. The Expo also features workshops, seminars and panel discussions on the various roles and opportunities within the field.

Animation Center

The Animation Center is a multi-purpose facility used for receptions, screenings and classes. It also features exhibit space and serves as ASIFA-Hollywood's headquarters. Expansion plans include a museum of animation history, a research library, additional space for seminars and workshops, and a permanent screening room. Events taking place at the Center include: Life Drawing Workshops, featuring a live model twice a week; Big Screenings, eclectic collections of rarely-seen cartoons; 'An Evening With…,' a series of programs focusing on the varying tasks and talents in animation production (presented by Tom Sito), as well as periodic special screenings, animation garage sales, seminars, tributes to animation pioneers, etc.

The Annie Awards

Since 1972, ASIFA-Hollywood has hosted an annual awards ceremony in order to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to the art of animation. Originally designed to honor a few legendary veterans of the field, the 25th Annual Annie Awards are scheduled to include almost 30 categories in competition. These will be held at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium on November 16th, 1997. Awards include the classic Winsor McCay Award and the recently added June Foray Award, as well as Certificates of Merit.

AniFest!

This Annual animation convention features a wide array of animation artwork, videos, publications and collectibles for purchase. Other activities include artwork exhibits, personal appearances by veteran animators, live stage shows hosted by famous voice artists, informational displays, costumed characters, and other animation-related entertainment. AniFest!, occurring annually for more than two decades, has become the largest and longest-running festival of its kind in the world.

InBetweener and Calendar

The monthly newsletter of ASIFA-Hollywood (The Calendar) features information about upcoming events and up-to-date news and schedules. Our quarterly publication (The InBetweener) offers coverage of our organization's functions and programs, as well as articles and interviews.

The Animation Center is a multi-purpose facility used for receptions, screenings and classes.

Membership

We invite you to join the International Animated Film Society, ASIFA-Hollywood, and to participate in the various activities that we have to offer. For more information you may write us at 725 S. Victory Blvd., Burbank, CA 91502 USA. Our email is asifa@earthlink.net. Feel free to explore the ASIFA-Hollywood web site at http://www.awn.com/asifa_hollywood, and we'll see you in animation!

*ASIFA is the French Acronym for "Association Internationale du Film D'Animation," an organization founded in 1957 in France by a group of professional animators and chartered by UNESCO in 1960 to encourage the art of animation and further international understanding and goodwill through the animation medium. Today, there are nearly thirty chapters around the world.

Dave Crane is Coordinator of the ASIFA-Hollywood Animation Center. He has assisted ASIFA with publications and other projects since 1981.

NEWS

by Wendy Jackson

Business

Bohbot Branches Out. Bohbot Entertainment & Media, purveyors of children's media properties, has named top level executives to head up its three subsidiaries. George Baratta will be President of BKN Kids Network, which distributes syndicated children's programming blocks which include shows like *Extreme Dinosaurs*. Bruce Kravetz will be President of Quantum Media, which handles media buying, planning and research. Nadia Nardonnet has been promoted to President of the International Division, which has been renamed BKN International.

Disney Opens Shop In Toronto. Only two years after announcing their intent to open Canadian production facilities, Disney has created a fully-functional animation unit with two studios, and has produced a full-length animated video. Walt Disney Animation Canada Inc. has expanded its production service capabilities, by officially opening its' permanent studio in Toronto, in addition to the one which has been operating in Vancouver since 1996. The Toronto facility, which was "unveiled" in October, will operate in conjunction with the Vancouver studio as one co-existing production unit referred to as "the Canadian studio." The announcement was made by Walt Disney Television Animation, which until now, has overseen development and pre-production of direct-to-video titles produced in Canada. Pre-production, such as storyboarding, character design and layout, will now be handled by the Canadian studio, creating the first full-service facility in the Walt Disney Television Animation family. It was also announced by Disney TV's Senior VP of International Production Lenora Hume, that Walt Disney Animation Canada is "on target to triple production in the coming year," by simultaneously working on three films in various stages of development and production. To accommodate increased production, the total staff between both facilities is expected to expand from 200 to 225 by 1998. "The Canadian studio is central to Disney Television Animation's expansion strategy," said Joan Fischer, the recently appointed General Manager of Disney Animation Canada. Walt Disney Home Video will release Disney Animation Canada's debut direct-to-video property, *Beauty and the Beast: The Enchanted Christmas* on November 11. For an inside look at Disney's home video division, don't miss our feature article on Buena Vista Home Entertainment in this issue of Animation World Magazine.

Will Vinton Studios' Toys commercial for Nissan has got Mattel worked up. ©Will Vinton Studios.

Mattel Takes Issue With *Toys* Spot. Mattel, Inc. has filed a lawsuit against the Nissan Motor Company Ltd., over a complaint that the car company's animated commercial, *Toys,* features unauthorized use of the toy company's trademark and brands. The 30-second spot in question, produced by Will Vinton Studios, features "Roxanne" and "Tad" dolls, which resemble Mattel's Barbie and Ken properties a little too closely for comfort. In addition, Mattel is taking issue with other props in the commercial which resemble Mattel toys, including a doll house, a race track, a dinosaur and even a hula hoop. However, "Nick," the army cadet doll featured as the Nissan-driving hero, is not an issue with Mattel, as G.I. Joe is a property is owned by another toy company, Hasbro. The case, filed in the U.S. District Court's Central District of California, is now in litigation, and has yet to be

resolved. Mattel's Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications, Sean Fitzgerald, said on behalf of the company, "We are hoping for a mutually beneficial resolution through negotiation." Neither the ad agency, Chiat/Day, or the production company, Will Vinton Studios, involved in the commercial are liable in the suit, which is strictly between Mattel and Nissan.

Nelvana Divvies Up Divisions. Nelvana Ltd. has recently restructured operations at its Toronto-based studio, creating four new divisions: Animated Television Production, Domestic Production, 3-D Animation Production and Feature Film Production. In the restructuring, two Nelvana producers were moved up into the executive ranks; Stephen Hodgins has been named Senior Vice President, Production and Patricia Burns has been named Vice President, Production. "Our goal is to build depth of management to support a substantial increase in proprietary animation production," said Patrick Loubert, who is co-CEO of Nelvana with Michael Hirsch. The Animated Television Production division, headed by producer Jocelyn Hamilton, will handle the core series work that is Nelvana's staple. The Domestic Production Division, headed by supervising producer Vince Commisso, will concentrate on mixed media and non-traditional animation. The 3-D Animation Production Division, announced in June and headed by supervising producer Pamela Slavin, is already in production on the series *Rolie Polie Olie*, based on William Joyce's children's book. Lastly, the Feature Animation division, managed by supervising producer Merle Anne Risley, plans to produce at least one feature film a year, such as the limited theatrical and current home video release, *Pippi Longstocking*. The next feature project, *Babar, King of the Elephants*, is based on one of Nelvana's popular television series, which is, in turn, based on a line of children's books.

Sunbow Launches Into Licensing. New York-based independent production company Sunbow Entertainment has launched an in-house merchandise licensing division, in a move to broaden the scope of their business of both animation and live-action production. The division will be headed up by Vice President of Licensing and Merchandising, Glenn Weber, who was most recently Vice President of Licensing and Brands at Meridian Worldwide, an independent licensing agent. Sunbow, which owns rights to more than 1,100 half-hours of children's programming, is currently licensing three of their animated television properties: *The Tick, Salty's Lighthouse* and *Brothers Flub.*

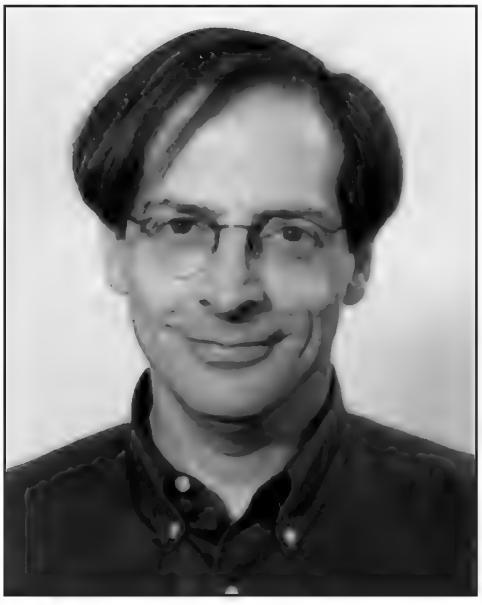
Viacom Sells Its' Half Of USA. The Seagram Company, Ltd. and Viacom, Inc. came to an agreement regarding the ownership of USA Networks, a cable network which has, until now, been jointly owned by the two companies. Seagram will acquire Viacom's 50 percent interest in USA, for $1.7 billion in cash. This will bring USA Network (72 million subscribers), The Sci-Fi Channel (46 million subscribers) and USA Networks International, with networks in South America, Europe and Africa, under complete ownership of Seagram, which is perhaps best known as a distributor of alcohol products. As this decision has been deliberated for quite some time, USA Networks' Founder, Chairman and CEO Kay Koplovitz said "I am very gratified that the ownership of USA Networks has been successfully resolved." USA Network has been airing original episodes of Klasky Csupo's animated series, *Duckman* in prime-time since January 1994.

Zoa Martinez.

People

Hollywood Shuffle. Maureen Donley, Executive Producer of Fox's upcoming animated feature, *Anastasia*, has signed a two-year, exclusive deal with FOX Family Films to produce both animation and live-action films. Donley joined Fox in 1995, after eight years at Walt Disney Feature Animation. . . .Lauren Kamin, formerly of Ballyhoo, Inc and Creative Artist's Agency, will also join FOX Family Films in the development department. . . .Curious Pictures has named Rachel Klein exclusive East Coast Sales Representative. Klein, who has a production background, will be based in Curious' Manhattan office. . . .Designer/director **Zoa**

Martinez has joined the roster of directors at **Atlantic Motion Pictures,** a New York-based commercial visual effects/animation studio. . . .**Howard Green**, a publicist at Disney for more than 20 years, has been internally promoted to Vice President, Studio Communications for **Buena Vista Pictures Marketing.** . . . **Rhythm & Hues Studios** has brought on **Theresa Ellis** as a visual effects supervisor, and **Billy Koch** and **Randy Star** to its visual effects marketing team. . . . Disney Regional Entertainment has named **Mel Bilbo** Vice President and General Manager of its new gaming center venture, **Disneyquest**. Bilbo was formerly an executive with Busch Entertainment Corporation, owners of Busch Gardens theme parks . . . **Digital Domain**, the Venice, California-based visual effects studio, laid off about 50 employees last week, after the completion of effects work for the feature film, *Titanic*. The studio's work force, cut by 30 people in July, is now down to about 200 people. . . . **Sony Pictures Imageworks** has cut 20 people from its' staff of more than 300 employees, following the completion of effects work on the Columbia TriStar feature film, *Starship Troopers*. . . . . Paris-based **Pixibox Studios** has named **Anne Aghion** to the post of Director, International Production Development. In this new position, she will be based in Los Angeles, looking for co-production opportunities. . . . Pixibox's sister company, animation software developer, **Mediapegs,** has named **Philippe Lasry** Vice President, International. . . . . **Frankie Kowalski** has joined multimedia/web design firm **Ad Dimension 2** (AD2) as traffic production manager. Kowalski was formerly director of marketing at *Animation Magazine*. . . . **Peter Chung, Bill Kroyer, Mark Osborne, Mike Johnson And Leslie Cabarga** have signed to Hollywood-based **Acme Filmworks** for representation. See the Commercials News section this issue for details. . . . Artist/writer **Jim Benton** has signed an agreement with **Dreamworks Television Animation,** optioning the rights to develop his property, *Clementine*. . . . New Jersey-based animator **John Schnall** has announced the formation of an independent production studio called **Quality Schnallity, Inc**. Already in production is a project for Nickelodeon titled *A Short Film For Short People*, which will air in January 1998. . . . **Dominique Bourse** has been promoted to Vice President, International for **Disney Interactive.** Bourse was previously Vice President, Disney Interactive Europe, Middle East and Africa. . . . **Fox Television** has named **Mary Ann Halford** senior vice president and general manager of **Canal Fox** and **Fox Kids Latin America**. In this role, Halford will oversee all aspects of operations for both of the Latin American broadcast services, Canal Fox and Fox Kids, which are telecast in Spanish and Portugese, as well as English. Halford was previously employed at Inter./comm Management, and prior to that, at Solomon International Enterprises. . . . **Dean Valentine** has been named president and CEO of UPN, replacing Lucie Salhany, who will remain on UPN's operating committee. Dean Valentine was formerly president of Walt Disney Television and its' Animation division. While at Disney, Valentine oversaw a large amount of animated programming, and the acquisition of New York animation studio, Jumbo Pictures. UPN, on the other hand, programs only a small amount of animation, including *Jumanji* and *The Incredible Hulk*. . . . **John Andrews** has left his post as vice president of MTV Animation in New York to take on independent producing projects. . . . **Simon Amselem** has been named managing director for the soon-to-be-launched **Disney Channel Spain**. . . . **Allan Neuwirth** and **Gary Cooper**, under the banner of their production writing company, **Two Idioms**, recently completed writing for the second season of *Big Bag*, the Children's Television Workshop series for Cartoon Network. Slated to air in spring 1998, the new episodes will feature 39 cartoon shorts, including Neuwirth and Cooper's clay-animated *Koki*, produced by Cine Nic in Spain, and the 2-D animated *Ace and Avery* by New York-based John R. Dilworth's Stretch Films



Jerry Beck.

Jerry Beck Moves To Disney. Animation historian Jerry Beck has taken on a position with Walt Disney Television Animation to identify and develop new projects based

on existing Disney properties. Beck, a well-known animation historian and author of several books on animation, recently left his post as Vice President, Animation, at Nickelodeon Movies. He had been for three years, working out of New York until January 1997, when he relocated to Los Angeles, where he will remain for the Disney job. In this role, Beck will "assist in making proper use of Disney's most valuable assets—the characters and properties created during the company's 74-year history," said Walt Disney Television Animation senior vice president Barry Blumberg. He added, "We believe Jerry's fresh perspective and insight will help enrich our creative process as we further explore and develop projects for our classic Disney characters to appeal to today's audience." Enthused about the opportunity to play a role in the development of classic Disney properties, Beck said, "We're living in another world than when many of these characters were created. Particularly for Disney's original five characters—Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Goofy and Pluto—there has been a tendency to focus on what the characters wouldn't do instead of what they would. . . I'd like to help us step to the next level." He added: "I'm a purist, and I realize that Disney has a legacy that its fans take quite seriously. Still, there's a wealth of outstanding creativity hidden in the nooks and crannies of Disney's features and shorts that have not been exploited, or possibly not even seen by most people. These are good ideas, and they shouldn't be in a dead letter office. They should be out there to enjoy."

Places

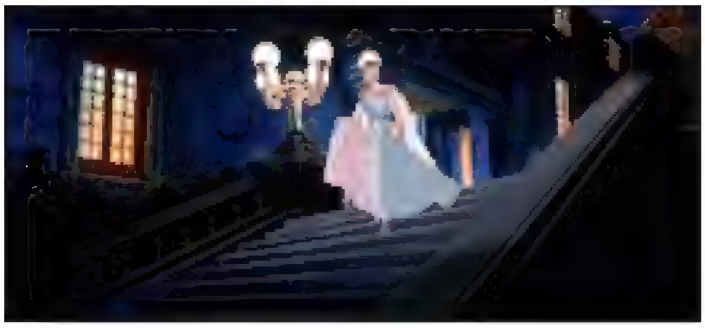
Lumpy Gravy Opens Gallery. Lumpy Gravy, the Los Angeles restaurant/club co-owned by Klasky Csupo's Gabor Csupo, has inaugerated its' Csupo Crain Gallery with an exhibition called "The No Brow Experience." On display until November 6, the show includes work by underground comic artist, The Pizz, and painter, Anthony Ausgang. Named after Gabor Csupo and artist/poet Brett Crain, the gallery also plans to maintain a collection of animation art.

The Pizz will exhibit his new collection including, "The Purple Dahlia" (shown here) at Lumpy Gravy's Csupo/Crain gallery. ©The Pizz.

Suzan Pitt Exhibit. Independent animator and teacher Suzan Pitt, who made her mark in the 1970s with her animated film *Asparagus*, is the subject of a current exhibition, through November 8, at an Austin, Texas art gallery called Women and Their Work. The show features paintings and original production art from her latest animated short, *Joy Street*. Suzan will give a lecture and screening of her work on October 16, at the adjacent Dobie Theater. For more information, call the gallery at (512) 477-1064. To learn more about the artist, read our profile article on Suzan Pitt in the February 1997 issue of Animation World Magazine.
http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.11/articles/leger1.11.html

Films

Anastasia Has Arrived! Fox Family Films' debut animated feature film effort, and Don Bluth's first film since *Thumbelina* (Filmation), has been completed and will be released in theaters in New York on November 14, with a nationwide (U.S.) release set for November 21. *Animation World Magazine* got a sneak-preview of the film, and we can certainly say it was well worth the wait! Nearly three years in the making, *Anastasia* was produced and directed by duo Don Bluth and Gary Goldman (*The Secret of NIMH, An American Tail*), and created by a team of roughly 300 people at Fox Animation Studios in Phoenix, Arizona. In addition, ten sub-contractor studios were used, including Character Builders and Bardel Animation. Based on the fabled story of the lost Russian Grand Duchess Anastasia, the film is an entertaining combination of action, drama and comedy. The lead characters are quite realistic, with the signature rotoscoped look of Don Bluth's previous films. Characterizations of the supporting characters are the most humorous, especially that of a sidekick bat named Bartok, who would be well-suited to TV series or home video spin-offs in the future (not that we



The long-awaited Fox Animation feature, Anastasia. ©Twentieth Century Fox.

are waiting, or anything!). Anastasia, or as she is nicknamed, Anya, is a refreshingly feisty and outspoken female lead (at least for the first half of the film), voiced by Meg Ryan. Additional voices include John Cusack, Angela Lansbury, Christopher Lloyd, Hank Azaria, Bernadette Peters and *Frasier* star Kelsey Grammer (who does his own singing!). The songs are catchy and well-suited to the story, not, as is so often the case, overly-dramatic. The seven main tracks feature clever lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty, a duo who also worked together on the musical theater production, *Ragtime*..

Technically, the film demonstrates a nearly seamless, sophisticated use of 2-D animation, combined with 3-D computer generated imagery, culminated best in an adventurous runaway train scene midway through the film. Though the production was entirely digital (using Softimage Toonz software and Silicon Graphics machines), Fox will be offering limited-edition animation art for the holiday season, through Animation USA. Although the film has not yet been released, Fox's marketing and advertising push is making an impression on the public. Apparently, some uninformed consumers have been asking for "Anastasia" merchandise at Disney Stores. . . But they won't find it there! The *Anastasia* master toy line from Galoob, as well as merchandise from more than 40 other licensees, will be available in stores in November.

Don't miss Harvey Deneroff's full review of *Anastasia*, including background on the story, in this issue of Animation World Magazine. Also, in the December issue, we will take a look at the new book, *The Art of Anastasia*, published by Harper Collins.

Starship Troopers. © 1997 TriStar Pictures.

Starship Troopers. Here's another film to be excited about, CG fans! The long-awaited new feature film from director Paul Verhoeven (*Robocop*, *Total Recall*) just may be the most masterful effects movie of the year, and the scariest too. *Starship Troopers* is a campy, futuristic depiction of universal war, in which the human race is pitted against giant CG arachnid, beetle, and dragonfly monsters— in a sensational outer space battle. The film was developed as a short pilot by Paul Verhoeven and Phil Tippett in 1994, then picked up by TriStar, once the duo convinced studio executives that it could actually be done. The completed, 124-minute feature includes more than 500 visual effects shots. For a comparison, *The Lost World* contains about 170 visual effects shots. Tippett Studios created 250 shots of insect character animation. Sony Pictures Imageworks did most of the space battle sequences (125 shots), with the help of Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) on key opening shots. Additionally, Mass Illusion, Banned From the Ranch and the recently closed effects studio, Boss Films were subcontracted on some of the effects work. Originally planned for a summer release, the film had so many effects shots that production was delayed when ILM was called in to help complete the spacecraft animation. Describing the role of the visual effects supervisor today, Phil Tippett said, "What we are doing now is much more akin to creating an animated feature, than it is to providing the insert effects shots for a live-

action picture." Without a pixel out of place, *Starship Troopers* will be released on November 7 across the U.S.

Knitwits. Candy Kugel and Vincent Cafarelli have completed their latest animated film, *Knitwits*, a 12-minute comedy short. Featuring the voice of Joan Rivers, among others, the film depicts a group of chatty women talking it up in a yarn shop. It was animated by hand in 2-D, then painted on the computer and output to film. *Knitwits* premiered in September at the New York Film Festival, and is being distributed by Kugel and Cafarelli's New York -based production company, Buzzzco Associates, who would like to develop the project as an animated television series.

Shedding Light On A Mexican CGI Co-Production. Liquid Light Studios, a small 3-D design and animation company in Los Angeles, is wrapping up production on a short film called *Pronto Saldremos del Problema (Our Troubles Will Soon Be Over)*. Funded by the Mexican Film Institute (MFI) the film is being directed remotely by the Mexico City-based director, Jorge Ramirez-Suavez. Character and background designs are being created by Ramirez-Suavez and artists in Mexico, and sent over the Internet to the production facility in Los Angeles. The film is created entirely in 3-D computer animation with 3D StudioMax software, using several character animation plug-ins. The two-minute film is expected to be released in January 1998, and will premiere by invitation at the Cannes Film Festival in 1998. Our January 1998 issue of *Animation World Magazine* will feature a complete story on this project. Stay tuned!

PDI Effects-Maker Turns Peacemaker. Pacific Data Images (PDI) created the majority of the visual effects for *The Peacemaker*, the first feature film from DreamWorks, which was premiered to U.S. audiences last month. The action-adventure film features over 50 visual effects shots created by PDI, primarily explosions. The work was supervised by PDI's visual effects producer Les Hunter and visual effects supervisor Paul Wang.

Television

MTV Goes Downtown. MTV Animation has given the green light to the new series, *Downtown*, an animated take on urban life, based on interviews with real people. The 13 episode series, created by in-house director Chris Prynowski, set to air in 1998, follows the adventures of a diverse and multi-racial cast of characters who live in and pass through a Greenwich Village neighborhood in Manhattan. Though the concept is similar to a series of interstitials which have been airing on MTV this month, *Downtown* is an original series which will be created using traditional 2-D animation, digital ink & paint, and watercolor backgrounds—as is used for series such as *Beavis & Butt-head*. This new series means new hires for MTV Animation, so visit Animation World Network's Career Connections section for information about applying for the available positions.
http://www.awn.com/career

JP Kids To Create *Kimmy's World*. New York-based multimedia company, JP Kids, is joining forces with actress/comedienne Kim Coles, to develop an animated series called *Kimmy's World*. Conceived in the tradition of *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, the property features characters created and voiced by Kim Coles herself, who stars on the live-action television series, *Living Single*.

The Online Adventures of Ozzie the Elf. © 1997 Will Vinton Studios.

DNA And Vinton Making X-Mas Specials For ABC. Production is underway on two half-hour, animated Christmas specials for ABC, which are set to air on ABC network in the U.S. in December. Texas-based DNA Productions is writing and producing *Santa vs. The Snowman*, based on an idea by executive producer and writer-director-comic Steve Oedekirk, who most recently presented a partially real-time animated special on NBC. *Santa vs. The Snowman* is being created entirely in 3-D computer animation with Newtek's Lightwave 3D software. Portland, Oregon-based Will Vinton Studios is in production on a special titled, *The Online Adventures of Ozzie the Elf*. Written, directed and produced by Will Vinton Studios, the story is inspired by *Santa's Home Page*, a web site launched last Christmas by America Online's Greenhouse Networks. The special is being produced by Vinton

Studios for ABC in association with AOL and the late Brandon Tartikoff's Beale Company. *Ozzie* is being produced entirely in stop-motion puppet animation at Will Vinton Studios, directed by Dave Bleiman and Ken Pontac of Danger Productions, creators of the ABC stop-motion series, *Bump in the Night*. Air dates for *Santa vs. The Snowman* and *The Online Adventures of Ozzie the Elf* have yet to be determined by ABC, though they may air as a program package.

© Film Roman.

Film Roman, Tooniverse Co-Production. Film Roman, producers of *The Simpsons*, and *King of the Hill*, has signed a co-production deal with Korea's cable network, Tooniverse, to create a new half-hour animated series called *Mulk & Swank*. The new series will be based on (you guessed it) Mulk and Swank, two characters from a kids' sing-along video popular in Korea. The two companies plan to ultimately market, distribute and license the property worldwide, with Tooniverse handling Asian territories, and Film Roman handling the rest of the globe.

UPN Gives Back The Blues. Due to a change in prime-time strategy, UPN has canceled its' plan to produce Film Roman's proprietary property, *The Blues Brothers: The Animated Series*. This announcement comes on the heels of a renewed commitment to the property after a hiatus in its' development (Animation World News, October 1997). Addressing the financial implications of UPN's decision, Film Roman's recently-appointed president and CEO David Pritchard issued a statement: "UPN has compensated us for a portion of the costs associated with the production of the show, but we expect to take a write-off in the third quarter of approximately $2 million associated with the decision." A Film Roman spokesperson said that the company "strongly believes in the property," and will be shopping the show to other networks.

Nelvana, CTW Partner On *Problem 13*. Children's Television Workshop (CTW), producers of *Sesame Street*, and other educational kids programming, are partnering with Toronto-based Nelvana to produce *Problem 13*, an educational animated series about math. CTW will complete most of the research and development, while Nelvana will collaborate on development and do all production of the series' 13 half-hour episodes. Distribution rights will be divided between the two companies, with CTW handling the U.S., Latin America and Asia, and Nelvana handling Canada, Europe, Africa and the Middle East territories. The series was presented at the international television market MIPCOM, last month in Cannes, however specific sales have yet to be released.

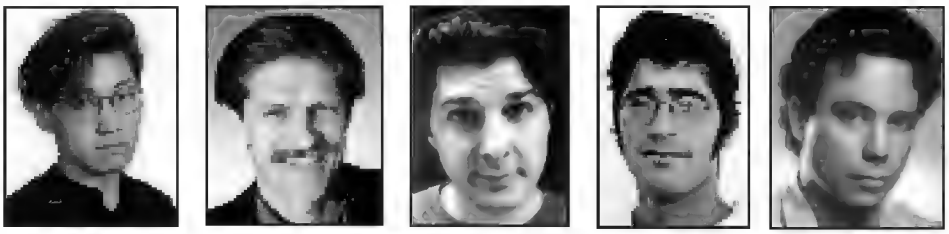
JP Kids Takes *Yahooligans!* To TV. New York-based multi-media company, JP Kids is developing and pitching an animated series in association with Internet developer Yahoo. Titled *Yahooligans!*, the series concept is based on Yahoo's web site of the same name which is an Internet navigational guide for kids. Though no pilot has been produced yet, JP Kids is working with San Francisco-based Protozoa to develop it in motion-capture animation format. This type of program indicates the start of a promising new trend: that of Internet-originated characters being developed for television properties, rather than the other way around. Targeted at the 8-12 age group, *Yahooligans!* is a character-driven, action-adventure show set in "21st Century Cyberspace," featuring a cast of avatar kids created by a 12-year-old boy. No pre-sales of the show have been announced.

Canal + Adds Kids +. European media company, CANAL + Distribution is launching a new youth programming and animation division called KIDS +, which will be headed up by Merry Mullings, a veteran television sales executive who joined CANAL + in 1990. The KIDS + division will handle the international sales of audio-visual rights and marketing strategies for CANAL +'s catalog of over 800 hours of children's programming. CANAL +, which adds 60 to 70 hours of new children's programming to its library each year, will launch five new animation programs at MIPCOM next week. They include the animated series *Bob Morane, Witch World,* and *Fennec*, and two features based on *The Brave Little Toaster*.

Commercials

Acme Filmworks Adds 5

Directors. Hollywood-based Acme Filmworks, a production company which represents more than 40 directors, has signed five additional directors of animation for representation: Peter Chung, Bill Kroyer, Mark Osborne, Mike Johnson and Leslie Cabarga. Two of the directors have already begun work at the studio, while the other three are being pitched for various projects. Peter Chung, creator of MTV's *Aeon Flux*, is a veteran of Colossal Pictures, and has worked for Disney, Marvel Animation, Murakami/Wolf, and Klasky-Csupo. At Acme, Chung is currently directing animation on a commercial for Psygnosis' upcoming Sony PlayStation game, *G Police*, out of the agency Wong Doody in Seattle. Bill Kroyer is an Academy Award-nominee (*Technological Threat*) and director of the animated feature *FernGully: the Last Rainforest*. While he is currently working on feature projects at Warner Bros., Kroyer will be represented non-exclusively for commercial directing through Acme. Mark Osborne is a stop-motion animator who has worked independently on many animation projects since his graduation from Cal Arts in 1992. His credits include spots for E! Entertainment Television, Cartoon Network, TBS and Duck Soup Producktions, as well as the *Jurassic Park*-spoofing music video for Wierd Al Yankovic. Mike Johnson, a 1990 graduate of Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), is also a stop-motion animator. His credits include work with Skellington Productions (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *James and the Giant Peach*.), Olive Jar Studios, Danger Productions, Curious Pictures and Passion Pictures, as well as several short films including the recent *The Devil Went Down to Georgia* with Fat Cactus Films. Leslie Cabarga is an artist whose graphics work includes several published volumes of clip-art books, as well as creation of artwork for a variety of Betty Boop products. With Acme Filmworks, Cabarga recently directed a 30-second graphical spot for Advocate Health Care, out of the agency, Coil, Counts, Ford & Chaney, Chicago.
http://www.awn.com/acmefilmworks

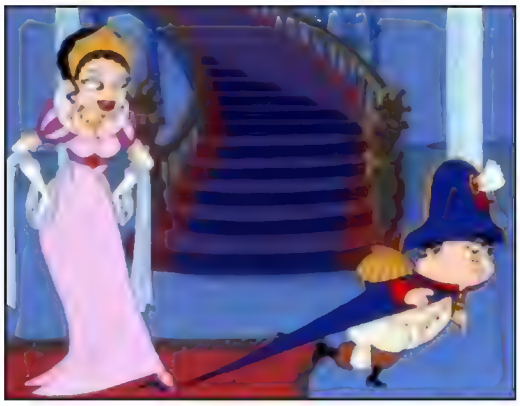


Acme Filmworks roster of directors now includes (left to right) Peter Chung, Bill Kroyer, Mark Osborne, Mike Johnson and Leslie Cabarga.

Character Builders Builds Business. Character Builders, an Illinois and Los Angeles-based animation studio, has added a CGI division and expanded its commercial representation through a deal with a live-action firm. The studio is now being represented by Soft Gravity Pictures, a division of S.O.S. This non-exclusive arrangement with Soft Gravity will serve as an additional avenue for commercial work to come into Character Builders. The studio has been recently focused on subcontract work for feature films such as *Anastasia* and *Space Jam*. John Donkin, a computer animator based in Minneapolis, will serve as the start-up base for the company's CGI division, which the studio expects to expand in the future.

George Cloney, J.J. Sedelmaier's illustrative spot for Brown & Company.

Spotlight. Will Vinton Studios created *Bravefruit*, a 30-second commercial for Tropicana FruitWise smoothie beverages. Blending stop-motion, live-action and computer animation, and directed by David Daniels, the spot depicts all kinds of fruit flying through the air into a blender, in a cinematic style inspired by widescreen epic films of the past. . . . . **Renegade Animation** created two 30-second spots for the National Prune Board, each depicting famous figures in history—Cleopatra and Napoleon— eating the "energy packed super snack." Both spots were created in 2-D, cel animation and directed by Darrel Van Citters..... **Wild Brain** created the animated spokesperson, *Net.Guy*, in a campaign for TCI.net's Internet connection service, @Home. The campaign includes four 30-second spots, directed by Robin Steele, with animation composited over stock footage and computer animation . . . . **Colossal Pictures** created a 30-second spot for Denny's Restaurants, in the style of traditional, classic cat-and-dog chase cartoons. Charles Gammage directed the animation for the spot, combining live-action with 2-D cel animation. . . . . **Loconte Goldman Design** created four opening spots for Reuters Business



Renegade's spot for the California Prune Board. © Renegade Animation.

Network. Each six-second sequence animates the Reuters logo. . . .**Lee Hunt Associates** and **The Ink Tank c**reated animated bumpers for ABC, packaging Disney's *One Saturday Morning* program block. The spots depict the program logo, designed by Lee Hunt Associates, animated by The Ink Tank in a lively, colorful style designed to appeal to kids ages 2-11. . . . **Viewpoint Studios** created three news and identity packages for Boston-area TV stations WMUR-TV, WNYT-TV and WHTM-TV, in preparation for the November sweeps. The spots depict the ABC logo animated in combination with regional film footage. . . . .**Curious Pictures** created three spots for The Clorox Company, promoting Clorox 2 bleach. The one 30-second, and two 15-second spots were directed by Garrett Sheldrew, using multiple layers of 2-D, cel animation. . . .**Curious Pictures** also recently created three 30-second commercials for the U.S. Postal Service. Directed by Portland-based animator Chel White (*Photocopy Cha Cha*), the spots utilize animation and original techniques such as projecting live-action footage onto shipping boxes. Titled *Price Zones, Different Places* and *Cross Country*, the commercials promote the use of USPS' priority mail service. . . . Boston-based **Loconte Goldman Design**, working with **Smash**, another Boston studio, designed and co-produced a series of promotional spots for *The Sally Jessy Raphael Show*, featuring animated graphics and type. . . .New York-based **J.J. Sedelmaier** completed *George Cloney*, its' seventh animated commercial for Boston-based financial consulting company Brown & Company. The 30-second spot continues a series of commercials which feature an animated version of detailed caricatures by political cartoonist David Levine.. . . . **AMPNYC** produced four promotional spots for Primestar Satellite Television, featuring the service's on-air mascot, Eugene. The New York-based studio also recently completed production of an animated host for a new European syndicated show called *Oops!*, for Peter Leone Productions, as well as a holiday promotional spot for Showtime, with Slate, Inc. . . . Atlanta-based **Crawford Communications** created customized replacement animation for a series of international commercials for the Coca-Cola Company. Using Discreet Logic's Flame software and their own Mechanical Concepts Motion Control System, Crawford rotoscoped-out and replaced moving beverage cans (i.e a Diet Coke can was replaced with a Coca-Cola Light can) within the shots. . . . London-based **Hibbert Ralph Animation** is working on their eighth spot in a series of 2-D animated commercials for British Telecom. Titled *Night Time*, the latest spot will air on October 6 to U.K audiences, who have been following the campaign since May. . . . New York-based **Manhattan Transfer** and broadcast design director Micha Riss created two packages of open, segment and bumper animation for both CBS Sports and USA Network's recent broadcast of the 1997 US Open Tennis Tournament. The 25- and 40-second spots include 3-D animated logos and graphics cut with live-action footage. . . . Manhattan Transfer also animated graphics and effects for *Plenty To See*, a live-action/animation commercial for the Ford Motor Company, through the agency J. Walter Thompson.

Manhattan Transfer's Plenty to See. © Manhattan Transfer.

Colossal's Skillet spot for Denny's. © Colossal Pictures.

Promoting the Escort car, the 30-second spot features animated words and musical notes interacting with a live actress. The animation was created by digital artists with the Henry, Flame and Inferno systems. . . .

The 30th Anniversary Limited Edition of Walt Disney's The Jungle Book. ©Walt Disney Home Video.

Home Video & Distribution

Don't miss "Animation To Go," our report on the latest animated home videos, in this issue of Animation World Magazine.

DVD is Coming.... The much talked-about new home entertainment technology, Digital Video Disk (DVD), will hit the U.S. market starting in November with a major marketing push from hardware manufacturers. Though DVD is touted as the medium that will replace video cassette recorders and players (VCRs), it is up to the content publishers and distributors to generate interest in the technology. Disney recently announced their first slate of titles to be released on DVD, which includes several live-action titles and one animated film, the stop-motion animated feature, *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas*. This title will be available in stores December 2, at $29.99. MGM Home Entertainment will debut two Dr. Seuss animated titles, *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*, and *Horton Hears A Who*, on a double-feature DVD. Though the films are re-releases of existing titles, MGM's offering maximizes the possibilities available in the new DVD format, with a special interactive Grinch trivia game, and images of pencil sketches of the Grinch and Horton characters from the original animated production directed by Chuck Jones.

Confused by all the talk about DVD? Don't miss our informative report on this and other new technologies, "The Life Cycle of DVD," in this issue of *Animation World Magazine*.

Manga's October Releases. Manga Entertainment released three Japanese animation home video titles in the U.S. on October 28. *Angel Cop-The Collection*, is a compilation of six episodes of the Japanese action series. The tape runs at 140-minutes and sells for $24.95 (SRP). *Shadow Skill - Part 2* is a 90-minute sequel, a *Street Fighter* series.

The Jungle Book On Video. Last month, Walt Disney Home Video releaseed the 1967 animated feature film, *The Jungle Book* on home video. The 30th Anniversary Limited Edition includes *The Making of A Musical Masterpiece*, a 15-minute mini-documentary on the musical recordings for the film, which includes footage of jazz legend Louis Prima recording the song *I Wan'na Be Like You*. Directed by Wolfgang Reitherman, *The Jungle Book*, is Disney's 19th animated feature, and the last animated feature film to be supervised by Walt Disney. *The 30th Anniversary Limited Edition of The Jungle Book* is available on video in U.S. stores from October 14 - January 31, 1998.

Fox Releasing Fourth Aardman Video. Twentieth Century Fox Home Video is releasing a new compilation of films by Aardman Animations, creators of the popular Wallace and Gromit films. Titled *Creature Comforts*, the compilation became available in U.S. stores on October 21, for $14.98 (SRP). Of course, the video contains Nick Park's classic clay-animated film *Creature Comforts*, as well as Peter Lord's *Adam*, *Wat's Pig*, and Boris Kossemehl's *Not Without My Handbag*. While all of these films have previously been available in the U.S. on assorted compilations such as The Tournee of Animation, this is the first time that these four films have been packaged together. Fox is promoting *Creature Comforts* alongside Nick Park's *The Wallace and Gromit Gift Set*, a $24.98 (SRP) three-volume package featuring *A Grand Day Out*, *The Wrong Trousers*, and *A Close Shave*.

Another Video For Casper! Harvey Entertainment, owner and licenser of properties such as *Casper* and *Richie Rich*, and Saban Entertainment, producer of animation such as *X-Men*, have agreed to co-produce a second full-length, live-action, direct-to-video feature based on Harvey Entertainment's

Casper character. Tentatively titled *Casper Meets Wendy*, and slated for a fall 1998 release, the film will include Harvey's classic Wendy the Witch character. This is a sequel to *Casper: A Spirited Beginning*, which was released this month, and has sold approximately 1.2 million units in the first week of retail sales.

Comics

Marvel Reissues. Four classic Marvel Comics characters have beeen relaunched with *Heroes Reborn: The Return*, a new, four-part weekly series of comic books featuring Captain America, Iron Man, the Fantastic Four, and the Avengers. The first comic in the limited-run series first became available October 8, with additional titles being released every week through the end of December. While these Marvel characters are being revived in print, fans in Los Angeles are still awaiting the opening of Marvel Mania, a Marvel character-themed restaurant in Universal City which was set to open this month. The Marvel Entertainment Group is still negotiating settlement with its secured lenders, and looking for a solution to its current bankrupt status.

SPX Awards Comic Artists. The Small Press Expo, an event held in Silver Spring, Maryland in September, honored several comic artists with the first Ignatz Awards for outstanding achievement in comics and cartooning. Named after George Herrimen's brick-wielding mouse, the Ignatz Awards aim to recognize work that challenges popular notions of what comics can achieve as an art form and a means of personal expression. Winners were determined by ballot by the attendees of the Small Press Expo:

- Outstanding Artist: Seth for *Palookaville*, published by Drawn & Quarterly.
- Breakout Talent: Debbie Dreschler for *Nowhere*, published by Drawn & Quarterly.
- Outstanding Story: *From Hell* by Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, published by Kitchen Sink Press.
- Outstanding Series: *Acme Novelty Library* by Chris Ware, published by Fantagraphics.
- Outstanding Comic: *Eightball # 17* by Daniel Clowes, published by Fantagraphics.
- Outstanding Minicomic: *The Perfect Planet* self-published by James Kochalka.
- Outstanding Graphic Novel or Collection: *It's A Good Life if You Don't Weaken* by Seth, published by Drawn & Quarterly.

© Spumco

Licensing

Playmates For *The King And I*. Morgan Creek Productions has signed a long term licensing agreement with Playmates Toys, to produce the master toy line for the animated feature film, *The King and I*. The agreement gives Playmates the worldwide rights to create a variety of merchandise based on the film, including dolls, figures, playsets and accessories. Morgan Creek will be pursuing additional licensees and corporate tie-ins for the franchise. The film, directed by Rick Rich and based on the Broadway musical of the same name, will be released in late spring or early summer of 1999, with U.S. distribution by Warner Bros., and international distribution by Morgan Creek.

Interactive & Internet

Spumco Debuts Web Toons. This week, John Kricfalusi's company, Spumco, will debuted animated cartoon series produced specifically for the Internet, *The Godamn George Liquor American Program*. Created using Macromedia's Flash authoring software, the cartoons can be viewed in real time using a web browser with the Shockwave flash plug-in installed. Despite the limitations of the Internet as a broadcasting medium, the possibilities seem to have inspired Kricfalusi, and with great results: a sneak preview of the short "films" proved them to be just as funny and well-animated as his television fare. John K., the original creator of *Ren & Stimpy*, has developed this new "cyber series" based on George Liquor, a loud and delightfully disgusting character which some fans may recognize from John K's *Comic Book* series of, well, comic books, published by Dark Horse. Fans may also recognize the character from the "lost episode" of *Ren & Stimpy* in which the famous cat and Chihuahua get adopted. John K. says he sees the Internet as a vehi-

cle for free enterprise, and a medium through which real creator-driven cartoons can thrive. He said, "In the broadcasting industry, most TV shows are tampered with or even created by corporate executives." He added, "The Internet is the biggest revolution in the world since the printing press. . . [it will] be able to provide a broad array of original entertainment worldwide, by giving cartoonists—such as myself—a forum for their work." Concurrent with the premiere of the series, Spumco is opening a Commercials Division, to produce original animated commercials for the web. The first episode of *The Godamn George Liquor American Program*, titled *Babysitting the Idiot*, premiered on October 15, at http://www.spumco.com.

Dilbert Goes 3-D! Scott Adams' popular comic book characters, Dilbert and Dogbert, have entered a completely new dimension on C/Net's Mediadome web site. The 2-D characters have been created in 3-D form and are currently appearing in 47 different VRML vignettes, or, as Mediadome calls them, "webisodes." In order to view the dimensionalised comic strips, viewers must be considerably dedicated; two different specialized browser plug-ins are required to load the files, including WorldView or Cosmo, and Mediadome's proprietary viewer software. Once all of the appropriate technologies have been set-up on a computer with plenty of memory, viewers with a 28.8 modem connection can expect a five minute wait to view a crude 3-D rendering of Dilbert and his dog, speaking lines from a pre-existing comic strip. More interesting than the clips themselves, is a mini-movie on the making of the Dilbert webisodes, which were created by San Francisco-based studio, Protozoa. The best part of the whole thing is the text "articles" about the comic strip, which include an interview with the original creator, Scott Adams. You'll find all of this at http://www.mediadome.com.

Quick Bytes.

Games....

Humongous Entertainment released *Spy Fox in Dry Cereal*, an animated interactive CD-ROM game for 5-10 year-olds, on October 17. . . . **Cavedog Entertainment** has released *Total Annihilation*, an action/adventure game featuring 3-D computer animation. The title is being made available in both CD-ROM format, and on the Internet, through Total Entertainment Network (TEN). Get it at http://www.cavedog.com. . . . **Knowledge Adventure** is launching a new line of Activity Center interactive titles, based on licensed properties from Warner Bros., DC Comics and Paramount. Three new CD-ROMs, *The Superman Activity Center*, based on the comic and TV series, *Batman and Robin Activity Center*, based on the comic and *Fairy Tale: A True Story Activity Center*, based on the new motion picture. . . . **Activision** has acquired the rights from Atari/JTS Corporation to develop new titles based on the classic video game properties *Asteroids* and *Battlezone*. This could signal a coming-of-age for the gaming industry, following the television and feature film industry trends of re-creating "evergreen" properties. . . . **Disney Interactive** released *Disney's Hercules Action Game*, the second CD-ROM game tied to the animated feature *Hercules*. Their kids title, *Hercules: Animated Storybook*, was released with the film in June. The new "Action Game" title, also available for Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn and Nintendo 64, features 3-D graphics and 40 hours of gameplay. The game is designed for the "tweeners" age group of kids, and ideally ones who have big allowances, because it is priced at approximately U.S. $35 for the Windows 95 version. . . . . Disney Interactive will also soon release a new educational CD-ROM title for kids called *Disney's MathQuest With Aladdin.* The title will be available in Windows and Macintosh formats, for about U.S. $35 . . . **Broderbund Software** released *The Cat in the Hat*, a CD-ROM game for pre-schoolers based on the classic children's book by Dr. Seuss. Designed to be used in a school environment, the game is packaged with the book and a teaching unit of activities. Price starts at U.S. $49.95. . . . .**Electronic Arts** released Blizzard Entertainment's *WarCraft II: The Dark Saga* for Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn platforms, for U.S. $49.95. The 3-D action adventure title was already available on CD-ROM for PCs.

On The Web....

Comedy Central is creating quite a buzz on the web with their *South Park* web site. In addition to a standard fan web site with Quicktime movies, a merchandise outlet, and registration for the "Booster Club", a *South Park* email fan club, they have also launched an interactive chat site in partnership with The Palace. This site offers devoted fans a chance to "be" their favorite *South Park* character—albeit in the form of a crude, 2-D avatar—and chat live, in text form, with other fans anywhere in the world (Though there can't be many *South Park* fans

in India....). Meanwhile, Comedy Central copyright protection patrol is policing activity on fan-created web sites devoted to *South Park*, particularly those broadcasting movie clips and images from the show without permission. . . . .**Cartoon Network** is broadcasting sneak-preview clips from *Space Ghost Coast to Coast*, on the web through Crawford Communications, who are involved in the production of the show. These clips are available every Monday at http://www.crawford.com/html/cool_stuff.html. . . . Animation historian Mark Mayerson has created a comprehensive web site devoted to the career of veteran animator **Al Eugster.** Located at http://www.geocities.com/hollywood/boulevard/3131, the site contains a detailed biography, and many photos of Eugster and coworkers which Mayerson is hoping that visitors will be able to help him identify. You can also read Mark Mayerson's article about the life of Al Eugster in the February 1997 issue of *Animation World Magazine.* http://www.awn.com/mag/issue1.11/articles/mayerson1.11.html

E3 Returns To L.A. The Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), organizers of the Electronic Entertainment Expo, a trade show affectionately known to the industry as E3, has announced plans to hold their annual event in Los Angeles for a five-year run, starting in May 1999. The first E3 shows, in 1995 and 1996, were held in Los Angeles, but the 1997 and 1998 shows are taking place in Atlanta, Georgia. The long-term move is good news to L.A. Mayor Richard Riordan, who, through several programs, has been making a concerted effort to foster growth of new media business in Los Angeles. "As the hub of innovation and creativity," said Riordan, "We are proud to have E3 as a partner in shaping the global economy for the 21st century."

For insight into the E3 event, read Joe Szadkowski's article "The Ever-Expanding E3 (Does that make it E5?)" in the July 1997 issue of *Animation World Magazine.* http://www.awn.com/mag/issue2.5/2.5pages/2.5szadkowskie3.html

Technology

Five New Raydream Plug-Ins. Northern California software developer Autonomous Effects has released five new plug-ins for MetaCreations' 3-D graphics and animation software, Ray Dream Studio 5.0. Compliant with both the PC and Macintosh platforms, the plug-ins create the mechanisms to perform very specific animation functions within Ray Dream Studio. The plug-ins are: Hotlips for lip-synching to a soundtrack, FaceShifter for mesh morphing, BoneBender for mesh deformation, TV Tweaker for improved transfer of digital animation to video and PoserImporter for importing 3-D models created in MetaCreations' human modeling program, Poser 2. The plug-ins are available individually at separate prices, or as a package for $249.99. They can be purchased and downloaded directly from the Autonomous web site at http://www.afx.com.

Free Softimage Cloth Plug-In. Cloth, like fur and human skin, is known to computer animators as one of the more difficult surfaces to animate. Topix, a Toronto-based animation and design studio, has released TopixCloth, a proprietary software plug-in for animating cloth in Softimage 3.7. Developed in December 1996 for a Honeycomb commercial, the plug-in, nicknamed "cyber fiber" has now been made available free over the Internet, as freeware. "It seemed a shame to have such a good piece of code sitting in our bin unused," said Frank Falcone, a Topix animation director who developed TopixCloth. The plug-in is available at www.topix.com/cloth.

Education

Savannah College Of Art And Design has purchased 30 licenses of Animo Ax-Cel 2-D animation software, for use in the school's 14 computer labs. Two of the 17 faculty members of the Computer Art Department will be trained on the software. Department chair Malcom Kesson said "Using industry-standard software provides the students with more marketable skills and easier penetration into studios."

Silicon Studio/La Courses/Seminar. Silicon Graphics' Santa Monica, California-based educational initiative, Silicon Studio/LA has announced their fall course offerings. With 35 courses in 3-D Modeling and Animation, 2-D Imaging and Paint, Studio Technology, Editing and Compositing and Technology, the program offers hands-on training in many of the software programs being used in the industry, including Alias PowerAnimator, Wavefront Kinemation and Dynamation, USAnimation, Softimage 3D, Houdini, Nichimen N•World and Discreet Logic FLINT. Ranging from $195 to $2,350 for each one to five-day class, it is certainly an investment, but the caliber of industry-trained faculty and high-end equipment available make the program

a worthwhile consideration for artists looking to get a grasp on these technologies. Classes begin in early October. Visit www.studio.sgi.com for registration materials and information.

Call for Entries

SAS Conference Call For Papers. The tenth annual Society for Animation Studies (SAS) conference, scheduled to take place in Orange, California in August 1998, is now accepting presentation proposals. Preference will be given to proposals within the conference theme of "In the Beginning....," which could include studies of student works of now accomplished artists, the early years of particular studios, schools and organizations, and prototypes of computer or other animation-related technologies. Proposals should include a 25-50 word summary of the presentation, suitable for publication, as well as a 250-500 word abstract. While the final deadline for submissions is January 15, an early decision deadline of November 1 has been set to give people traveling long distances ample time to make travel arrangements. Financial assistance may be available for students and those in need. For financial aid consideration, applications must also be received by November 1.

Send your materials to:

Maureen Furniss, Ph.D.
School of Film and Television
Chapman University
333 North Glassell Street
Orange, CA 92866 USA
Phone: (714) 744-7018
Fax: (714) 997-6700
Email: furniss@chapman.ed URL: http://www.chapman.edu/animation

For more information about The Society for Animation Studies, visit the SAS web site in AWN's Animation Village.
http://www.awn.com/sas

International Monitor Awards. The International Monitor Awards, an event for the teleproduction and digital media industry, is accepting submissions for its next awards show, to be held in Southern California in Summer 1998. The competition features awards for 20 categories and 8 craft production areas, mostly in the realm of commercial production, such as Opens, Closes & Titles, Logos & IDs and On-Air Promotions. The entry deadline is January 30, 1998, with an early-bird discount given to works submitted before November 21. Entry fees range from $135 to $175, depending upon whether the producing company is a member of the International Teleproduction Society. For information, call (703) 641-8770.

Asian Pop-Culture Con. The Center for Asia-Pacific Initiatives and the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Victoria will hold a conference on the theme of Asian Popular Culture, April 16-18, 1998 in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The event organizers are now accepting paper submissions for conference presentations. Selected papers will be published in a book to be edited by Dr. Richard King and Tim Craig. Topics that could be addressed include Japanese comics (manga) and animation (anime). To submit a work for consideration, you may send your paper by email to tcraig@business.uvic.ca.

San Fran Film Fest. The 41st San Francisco International Film Festival will take place April 23 to May 7, 1998. Submissions are now being accepted for its' Golden Gate Awards competition for animation, documentaries, shorts, experimental work and television. The winner in the animation category will receive a $500 cash prize, and a chance at the $1,000 prize in the shorts category. Additional prizes include awards specifically for Bay area filmmakers. The entry deadline is December 12. For entry forms and information, visit http://www.sfiff.org

Events

Tunes For Toons. San Francisco animation fans are enjoying a new form of frame-by-frame entertainment. "Ideas in Animation" is a monthly event in which animated films are screened to the accompaniment of live music. "It's 80% rehearsed, and the rest is improvisation," said Nick Phelps, a musician and composer who conceived, curates and scores the programs. Animators are encouraged to send in films and even works-in-progress to be considered for inclusion in the programs (honorarium paid for commercial screenings). While the events are based at San Francisco's Minna Street theater for now, Phelps hopes to take the show on the road next year. The "Ideas in Animation" schedule for the rest of 1997 is November 6, November 24 and December 7. For information/reservations, call (415) 681 3189. Film submissions may be sent (with SASE) to: 2066 30th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94116-1148.

MIFED Launches MIFED Cartoons. The 64th International MIFED film market took place

October 19-24, 1997 in Italy. For the first time, MIFED offered a new initiative called MIFED CARTOONS, aimed to "foster and support the marketing of animated features for both theatrical and home video purposes." MIFED CARTOONS will include a daily schedule of screenings, a business center with an Internet-connected computer linked to related web sites, and an on-site "video library," where buyers can view video cassettes and access a data bank of available films and rights information. In addition, Mediatech and IBTS will present a seminar on the subject of new technologies being used in animated feature production.

Awards

Third Virtual Systems & Media Con. The Society of Virtual Systems and Media (VSMM)'s third annual conference took place in Geneva, Switzerland last month. The Computer Animation Film Festival awarded the following prizes:
Grand Prize: *Superstition* by Movida SA.
Best 3-D Effects: *Stormfront* by Ian Palmer of Bradford University.
Best Fiction Film: *Sticky Business* by Ed Taylor.
Best Technology Innovation: *Krakken* by ExMachina.
Audience Prize: *Sticky Business* by Ed Taylor.
For information about this event, visit http://miralab.unige.ch/~vsmm97

LA Short Film Fest. On October 3-5, the first annual Los Angeles International Short Film Festival, aka L.A. Shorts Fest, took place at Barnsdall Art Park in Hollywood. Although we heard about the festival only a day before it began, AWN was there to check out the program, which included several animated films mixed into the predominately live-action programming. The competition, which gave the Best Animation award to Timothy Hittle's Academy Award-nominated *Canhead*, also included animated films: *The Cocoon* by Jerilyn Mettlin, *Mike Rophone* by Liz Ridley, *Law of Averages* by James Duesing, *Season's Greetings* by Michael Dougherty, *Cup-o-Abominations* by Ben Hillman, *Ay Yuk* by Atipat Kamanpet, *Fluffy* by Doug Aberle, *Lord J's Wild West Daredevil Show* by Steve and Justin Kohn, *Christmas Lament* by Tak Hoon Kim, *Birdhouse* by Richard Zimmerman and *Publegg Enemy* by Carrie Kessler and Dave Clausen. To get a head start on participating in next year's LA Shorts Fest, visit http://www.lashortsfest.com

Disney Channel's Animated Short Contest. The Disney Channel has selected a story by 12-year-old Ian O'Neal to be produced as an animated short by Walt Disney Television Animation. Titled *Dragon Friend*, the story was selected from more than 22,000 entries submitted for Disney Channel's "Create Story Magic" contest, which, in conjunction with the American Federation of Teachers and other educational groups, invites elementary school children to write an original story of 750-1,000 words. O'Neal and the five other finalists will be sent with their families on a trip to Walt Disney World in Florida. They will also receive U.S. $1,000 of books from the Waldenbooks chain of stores.

Annie Award Nominees. The nominees for ASIFA-Hollywood's annual Annie Awards have been announced. The winners will be determined by a membership-wide voting, and the awards ceremony will take place on November 16 in Los Angeles. In addition to 19 categories of achievement awards, ASIFA-Hollywood also presents the Winsor McCay Awards and the June Foray Award each year. This year's Winsor McCay awards will go to Willis O'Brien, veteran stop-motion animator (*King Kong*), Myron Waldman, veteran animator (Fleischer Studios, *Betty Boop*) and Paul Winchell, voice artist (*Tigger*). The June Foray Award will go to the late Phyllis Craig, for her work in expanding the market for animation artists and opening the doors for new talent. The following nominees for the competitive awards were selected from over 500 entries by both industry panels for the individual achievement categories and a membership-wide vote for the production categories.

For information on ASIFA-Hollywood, visit their web site in Animation World Network's Animation Village.

Annie Awards 1997 Nominees:

Outstanding Achievement in an Animated Theatrical Feature:
Cats Don't Dance by Turner Feature Animation.
Hercules by Walt Disney Feature Animation.
Space Jam by Warner Bros.

Outstanding Achievement in an Animated Television Program:
Dexter's Laboratory by Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
King of the Hill by Twentieth Century Television Films in association with Deedle-Dee Productions, Judgemental Films, 3 Arts Entertainment and Film Roman.
The Simpsons by Film Roman,

Gracie Films in association with Twentieth Century Fox Television.
Steven Spielberg Presents Pinky and the Brain by Warner Bros. Television Animation.
The Tick by Sunbow Entertainment.

Outstanding Achievement in an Animated Interactive Production:
Absolut Panushka by Troon Ltd.
Green Eggs and Ham by Wild Brain.
Starcraft by Blizzard Entertainment.

Outstanding Achievement in an Animated Promotional Production:
Angry Beavers main title by Nicktoons.
Super Mom for Coca-Cola by Wild Brain.
Gargoyles main title by Walt Disney Television Animation.
Spawn promo by HBO Animation.
Visa Check Card *Daffy Duck* by Warner Bros. Classic Animation.

Outstanding Achievement in an Animated Short Subject:
Action League Now: "Rock-A-Big-Baby" by Nickelodeon.
The Ambiguously Gay Duo # 2 by J.J. Sedelmaier Productions.
The Ambiguously Gay Duo # 3 by J.J. Sedelmaier Productions.
Bjork: I Miss You music video by Spumco.
The Bug Hunt by Walt Disney Television Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Character Animation:
Bob Baxtor for "Beethoven's Whiff" in *The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa*. Walt Disney Television Animation.
Ken Duncan for Meg in *Hercules*. Walt Disney Feature Animation.
Franz Fisher for Darla Dimple & Max in *Cats Don't Dance*. Turner Feature Animation.
Nik Ranieri for Hades in *Hercules*. Walt Disney Feature Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Directing in an Animated Feature Production:
Marc Dindal for *Cats Don't Dance*. Turner Feature Animation.
Ron Clements & John Musker for *Hercules*. Walt Disney Feature Animation.
Bruce Smith & Tony Cervone for *Space Jam*. Warner Bros. Feature Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Directing in an Animated Television Production:
Mike Anderson for "Homers Phobia," *The Simpsons*. Film Roman.
Roberts Gannaway & Tony Craig for Beethoven's "Beethoven's Whiff/Bumble in the Jungle/Mind Over Matterhorn," *The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa*. Walt Disney Television Animation.
John Rice for "Keeping Up With Our Joneses," *King of the Hill*, Film Roman.
Charles Visser for "Noel," *Animaniacs*. Warner Bros. Television Animation.
David Wasson for *Voice B Gone*. Sore Head Productions.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Effects Animation:
Ken Ralston for *Contact*. Sony Pictures Imageworks.
John Armstrong for *Cats Don't Dance*. Turner Feature Animation.
Mauro Maressa for *Hercules*. Walt Disney Feature Animation.
Bob Simons for *Cats Don't Dance*. Turner Feature Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Music in an Animated Feature:
Leslie Bricusse (music written by) *The Land Before Time IV: Journey Through the Mists*. Universal Cartoon Studios.
Steve Goldstein for *Cats Don't Dance* (score). Turner Feature Animation.
Woody Guthrie (writer) & Frank Fuchs (arranger) for *This Land is Your Land: The Animated Kids' Songs of Woody Guthrie*. Guthrie/Calico Productions.
Randy Newman for *Cats Don't Dance* (songs). Turner Feature Animation.
Mark Watters & Carl Johnson (composers). *Aladdin and the King of Theives*. Walt Disney Television Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Music in an Animated Television Production:
Tom Chase, Steve Rucker (score) for *Dexter's Laboratory*. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
Alf Clausen (underscore) for *The Simpsons*. Film Roman.
Carl Johnson (composer) for *Mighty Ducks*. Walt Disney Television Animation.
Michael Tavera, Charles Fernandez, Ron Grant, Harvey Cohen (composers) for *Casper*. Universal Cartoon Studios.
Shirley Walker (main title) for *Superman*. Warner Bros. Television Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Producing in An Animated Feature Production:
Alice Dewey, Ron Clements, John Musker for *Hercules*. Walt Disney Feature Animation.
David Kirschner & Paul Gertz for *Cats Don't Dance*. Turner Feature Animation.
Ron Tippe for *Space Jam*. Warner Bros.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Producing in An Animated Television Production:

Al Jean, Mike Reiss for "The Springfield Files," *The Simpsons*. Film Roman.
Kathi Castillo for "Hyper-Psycrow," *Earthworm Jim*. Universal Cartoon Studios.
J.J. Sedelmaier for *The Ambiguously Gay Duo # 2* by J.J. Sedelmaier Productions.
Genndy Tartakovsky for "Ham Hocks n' Arm Locks," *Dexter's Laboratory*. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
Mitch Watson for "Ebony Baby," *Duckman*. Klasky-Csupo.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Production Design in An Animated Television Production:
Mike Moon for "Beethoven's Whiff," *The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa*. Walt Disney Television Animation.
Barbara Schade for *The Magic Pearl*. Film Roman/Greengrass Productions.
Mitch Schauer for "Born to be Beavers," *Angry Beavers*. Nicktoons.
Kexx Singleton for "Beethoven's Whiff," *The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa*. Walt Disney Television Animation.
Sy Thomas for "Bumble in the Jungle," *The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa*. Walt Disney Television Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Storyboarding in An Animated Television Production:
Carolyn Gair-Taylor for "Spaced Out," *The Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries*. Warner Bros. Television Animation.
Nora Johnson for "Orthodontic Police," *Cow and Chicken*. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
Denise Koyama for "A Night in Wasteland," *Disney's The Jungle Cubs*. Walt Disney Television Animation.
Bob Logan for "Beethoven's Whiff," *The Lion King's Timon and Pumbaa*. Walt Disney Television Animation.
Eric Radomski for "Burning Visions," *Spawn*. HBO Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Voice Acting by a Female Performer in An Animated Television Production:
Christine Cavanaugh as Dexter in *Dexter's Laboratory*. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
June Foray as Granny in *Tweety and Sylvester Mysteries*. Warner Bros. Feature Animation.
Tress MacNielle as Debbie Douglas in "Mission Freakazoid," *Steven Spielberg Presents Freakazoid*. Warner Bros. Television Animation.
Brittany Murphy as Luanne in *King of the Hill*. Twentieth Century Television Films in association with Deedle-Dee Productions, Judgemental Films, 3 Arts Entertainment and Film Roman.
Maggie Roswell as Sharry Bobbins in "Supercalifragilisticexpial(annoyed grunt)cious," *The Simpsons*. Film Roman.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Voice Acting by a Male Performer in An Animated Television Production:
Jeff Bennet as Johnny Bravo in *Johnny Bravo*. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
Townsend Coleman as The Tick in *The Tick*. Sunbow Entertainment.
Philip Hayes as Tumbleweed Tex in *School Daze*. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
Mike Judge as Hank Hill in *King of the Hill*. Twentieth Century Television Films in association with Deedle-Dee Productions, Judgemental Films, 3 Arts Entertainment and Film Roman.
Rob Paulsen as Pinky in *Steven Spielberg Presents Pinky and the Brain*. Warner Bros. Television Animation.

Outstanding Individual Achievement for Writing in An Animated Television Production:
Jason Butler Rote for "The Beard to be Feared," *Dexter's Laboratory*. Hanna-Barbera Cartoons.
Jane Wagner for "Just Say Noel," *Edith Ann's Christmas*. Kurtz & Friends/Tomlin & Wagner Theatricalz.
Mark Young for "Loyalty," *Adventures From the Book of Virtues*. Porchlight Entertainment.
Paul Lieberstein for "Luanne's Saga," *King of the Hill*. Twentieth Century Television Films in association with Deedle-Dee Productions, Judgemental Films, 3 Arts Entertainment and Film Roman.
Alan R. Cohen and Alan Freedland for "Shins of the Father," *King of the Hill*. Twentieth Century Television Films in association with Deedle-Dee Productions, Judgemental Films, 3 Arts Entertainment and Film Roman.

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DESERT ISLAND SERIES

On A Desert Island With. . . . Animation Art Aficionados

compiled by Wendy Jackson

This month, we asked a few animation art experts what ten films they would want to have with them on a desert island. Linda Jones Clough is the daughter of animation legend Chuck Jones, and president of Linda Jones Enterprises, a company which distributes limited edition art. Pierre Lambert is an avid animation art collector, consultant to Christie's, and author of several books on Disney animation art. Graham Parker is an animation art collector and dealer, and owner of The Animation Art Gallery at Oxford Circus in Central London.

Linda Jones Clough

Linda Jones Clough's selections

"You can't imagine how difficult this is for me...it's like asking a doctor to list which 10 medications he would most like to have with him on a desert island...it's almost impossible to do without qualifying that there are 'reasons' and there are sooooo many left out. But, here it is, from my immediate response and from my heart...in alphabetical order (not preference or priority)."

1. *Ali Baba Bunny* by Warner Bros.
2. *Beatrix Potter's Peter Rabbit* by TVC.
3. *Dover Boys* by Warner Bros.
4. *Dumbo* by Disney.
5. *Fantasia* by Disney.
6. *Gertie the Dinosaur* by Winsor McCay.
7. *Gulliver's Travels* , the 1939 animated feature by Fleischer Studios.
8. *Hot Stuff* by CFB.
9. *Munro* by UPA.
10. *Robin Hood Daffy* by Warner Bros.

Pierre Lambert.

Pierre Lambert's top ten:

1. *Pinocchio* by Disney.
2. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* by Disney.
3. *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Frederic Back.
4. *Crac* by Frederic Back.
5. *One Froggy Evening* by Chuck Jones/Warner Bros.
6. *Feed the Kitty* by Chuck Jones/Warner Bros.
7. *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* from *Fantasia,* by Disney.
8. All Tex Avery Cartoons (MGM period).
9. *The Jungle Book* by Wolfgang Reitherman.
10. *Desert* by José Xavier.

Graham Parker's Picks:

"I was never so much a fan of a complete film, more with individual parts that showed how these artists translated what we take for granted into their world. To see a concept painting, a sketch or a background is like looking through a partly open door into another world. The list of 10 films that I would want on my island take into account

very personal moments or memories, please read it realizing that I left the other 900 films behind and am still sad for that fact!"

1. *Pinnochio* by Disney. Could a film like this ever be made again?
2. *Thunderbirds*. What? I hear you ask. Well, this 1960s series was animated, but by marionettes not stop-motion. I hope I can get away with this! If you don't know it, you really have a great surprise waiting for you.
3. *The Wrong Trousers* by Nick Park. There are some films that get better and better like a fine wine. This is one of them. Each time you will see a small detail you missed the first time.
4. *Tom & Jerry "Downhearted Duckling"* by Hanna-Barbera. This 1954 short is one of my favorites. If I get a time machine, I want to go back and sit in on a storyboard meeting. Pure genius!
5. *Fast & Furry-ous* by Warner Bros. If I have one hope in my animation life, I hope that Chuck Jones has made a final episode of these legendary adversaries to be shown in some future year, in which Coyote will finally catch the Road Runner, and enjoy a barbecue in the desert.
6. *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Why did Disney bury this film? They have never been good at sharing the spotlight with anyone, but here was a film that has a tremendous cult following and they just whimpered it out and then filed it away.
7. *Pink Floyd The Wall*. Okay, I may not want to watch the live-action film too much on my island, but I will watch the 15 minutes of animation that was in it.
8. *The Simpsons*. I really believe that this series will be viewed as the series of the Nineties; like how in England at least *The Flintstones* are remembered for the Sixties.
9. *The Snowman* by John Coates.
10. *Superman* by Fleischer Studios and Filmation. It was a tough choice between him and Batman, but the pure style of this series won me over.

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AWN Comics

The Dirdy Birdy
by Dilly ©1997
I have survived being crushed by the tentacles of rejection, nearly drowned in tears of confusion. And then when I come up for air I am greeted by the sharp arrows of delight....
DJL '97
Color by
©
Stone Cold Busted

The Dirdy Birdy by John R. Dilworth

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

Gaming! December 1997

In December we will explore the expansive world of interactive animation. Christopher Harz will take us on a journey outlining the types of games that are available to play on the web. Have you noticed how all the newest games are available on Sony PlayStation? Joseph Szadkowski will investigate why. Doug TenNapel, visionary creator of *The Neverhood,* will be interviewed by Pamela Kleibrink Thompson about using clay animation as his unique visual style for CD-ROM games. Pamela will also report on her area of expertise (Listen up student readers!) in "Getting a Job in Multimedia." Wendy Jackson will detail some of the new games out for the holiday season and Tim Samoff will take us to class with "Gaming Tools: 101." In addition, Natalya Loukinykh will introduce us to Russia's "New Media Generation," while what is shaking "Down Under" will also be revealed.

Two bonus articles are also featured this month. Karl Cohen profiles *The Yellow Submarine* on its 30th anniversary, and Melissa Chimovitz will share her interview with Piotr Dumala and Jerzy Kucia at Fantoche.

Review section highlights include: Gunnar Strøm's report on the SAS Conference and Sayoko Kinoshita's review of Cinanima, Portugal's animation festival.

Animation World Magazine 1997 Calendar

Gaming: The World of Interactive Animation	(December)
Producing Results	(January)
Motion Capture and Stop Motion	(February)
The Art of Pre-Production	(March)